



COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS  
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

**VOL 3 SPRING 2017 CONTENTS**

**RICHARD DeSANTIS** *A World of Divide: Heideggerian and Cartesian Subjectivity in American Politics*

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COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS  
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# A World of Divide

## Heideggerian and Cartesian Subjectivity in American Politics

RICHARD DeSANTIS

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Since the 2016 presidential election, there has been no shortage of op-eds and commentaries attempting to explain the current divide between American liberals and conservatives. Many of these pieces have focused on the usual suspects—growing economic disparities, religious differences, and, of course, the urban/rural divide. While these explanations certainly have their merits, there seems to be something missing in treating them as disjointed causes. Is there not something more fundamental to the liberal and conservative worldviews that shapes these differences? In answering this question, perhaps it is necessary to consider another explanation—namely, that there is a crucial difference in the way the left and the right conceive of the human self. On the surface, this may appear immediately obvious; Republicans are typically not shy in their belief that the way to fulfill the American dream is by “picking yourself up by your bootstraps,” whereas liberals tend to see this way of thinking as ignoring environmental circumstances, especially socioeconomic conditions. What is perhaps less obvious, however, is the way in which this divide is connected to two different eras in philosophical thought: modernism and postmodernism. The purpose of my paper is twofold. I will begin by giving a descriptive analysis of the relationships of American conservatism and emerging liberal progressivism to modern and



postmodern thought. From here, however, a further question needs addressing: Is postmodernism just a passing intellectual fad, the latest “ism” that is preoccupying American liberals? Or does it have legitimate grounds as a criticism of the philosophical and political tradition? By returning to the work of Martin Heidegger and his criticism of René Descartes—the “father of modern philosophy”—I hope to show that emerging trends in postmodernism, and by extension twenty-first century progressive politics, are in fact philosophically justified.

### **The Political Divide**

Since its inception, American political thought has been heavily shaped and influenced by modern, Enlightenment philosophy. The first signs are present in our Declaration of Independence, whose claims to inherent equality and individual rights bear the distinct marks of John Locke and his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690). While notions of personal freedom and inherent equality have certainly shaped both conservative and liberal politics, what distinguishes these two worldviews is the strength with which they continue to hold onto modern ideals. On the one hand, conservatism does not seem to be loosening its grip; if anything, the calls from the right are for a renewed commitment to traditional values. Contemporary progressive liberalism, on the other hand, while also owing much of its focus on inherent equality and human rights to modern philosophy, has been far quicker to adopt recent trends in postmodern thought. This has often meant ditching the conservative picture of a stable and self-sufficient subject in favor of historically informed explanations that see the subject as “socially constructed.”

One social issue that highlights these differing perspectives is the disproportionate rates of incarceration among minorities. A large body of research has emerged in recent decades showing that minorities in America, especially young

Black and Latino men, are incarcerated at rates that far exceed their population levels. In 2010, the number of Blacks held in federal, state, and local prisons was nearly six times that of Whites even though Blacks only made up 12.6% of the population (U.S. Department of Justice; U.S. Census Bureau). Latinos were also incarcerated at disproportionate rates, more than doubling the number of incarcerated Whites despite making up 16.3% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau). While both the right and the left seem to acknowledge these as disturbing statistics, their explanations for the disparities are quite different. On the one hand, conservatives have often used statistics like these as evidence of the moral failures occurring within Black and minority communities themselves. In fact, former Fox news host Bill O'Reilly cited similar statistics to his audience of millions in 2016 when he said:

Here's the truth. African-Americans make up 13 percent of the total population in the USA but commit 37 percent of all murders. And 90 percent of black murder victims are killed by other blacks. It's much easier to decry racism than actually address the root causes of violent crime which are a corrosive culture and collapse of the traditional family. ("The O'Reilly Factor")

The liberal response to these arguments has often involved several steps. The first is to point out that these types of statistics do not actually refer to the amount of *crime* that is being committed, but rather to the number of *incarcerations*. On the issue of drug use, for example, surveys have shown that Whites report higher uses of cocaine, marijuana, hallucinogens, and pain relievers than Blacks (List of Available Quick Tables), despite the fact that Blacks are arrested for drug possession more than three times as often as Whites

(Fellner 271-272).<sup>1</sup> It is often claimed, therefore, that these statistics are more indicative of the biases at play in police arrests and in the justice system rather than the actual occurrences of crime.

Sometimes, however, the validity of these crime statistics are more difficult to call into question, such as those presented by O'Reilly regarding murder rates. In these cases, progressives have often conceded the validity of the statistics, but have attempted to raise a more fundamental question: Why is the crime happening? These crimes, it is argued, do not occur in an economic, social, or political vacuum, and cannot simply be reduced to personal moral failure as conservatives like O'Reilly would have it. For instance, the incarceration rates for drug use have the effect of disproportionately pulling minority fathers out of households, resulting in a destabilization of minority families and a surplus of single mothers.<sup>2</sup> This, in addition to other socioeconomic factors, such as discriminatory hiring practices and biased lending policies further obstruct minority families from climbing the proverbial social ladder. Consequently, there is an increased susceptibility for young minorities to join gangs, further perpetuating this cycle. Thus, it is argued that an entire history of social and political forces is at work when a young man who grew up in these conditions pulls a trigger and commits murder.

This tendency to paint a highly complex and interrelated conception of the environmental factors at play in a single

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<sup>1</sup> The statistic has fluctuated over time. As Fellner points out, during the years with the worst disparities (1988 and 1993) the number was more than five times.

<sup>2</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau Report "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012," more than half of African American households are run by a single parent. For more on minority incarceration and its effects on family structures see Joyce Arditto et al.'s "Saturday Morning at the Jail: Implications for Families and Children" as well as Robert Keefe et al.'s "African American Fathers: Disproportionate Incarceration and the Meaning of Involvement."

subject's actions is taken straight from the postmodern play-book. Much of this thinking is already present in the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's writings when he criticizes the human propensity to consider human actions as causes rather than as mere effects.<sup>3</sup> This view of the subject is further developed by Michel Foucault who says "the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces" (73-74). With this growing consensus among both philosophers and social scientists that things are often more complicated than they appear, progressives have often chalked up conservative thinking as simply ignorant of the operation of poverty and inequality in society. If only conservatives were exposed to the vast statistical research and philosophical discourse supporting these nuanced accounts of subjectivity, the argument goes, all would be remedied.

While increased education has historically been linked with a wider adoption of liberal views, it might be wishful thinking to regard it as an end-all solution. Even when confronted with these more postmodern perspectives—consider the issue of gender identity for instance—conservatives have often responded with increasing cries against "political correctness." The following interview, conducted by NPR's John Hockenberry with a conservative voter from Tulsa, Oklahoma just after President Trump's inauguration, is an example of such resolve in the face of more "historically informed" explanations:

Hockenberry: There came to be, in the last few years of the Obama administration, a consensus among conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats that the number of people who were incarcerated was too

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<sup>3</sup> See Nietzsche, "The Four Great Errors," *Twilight of the Idols*.

much. . . . Are you aware of that consensus that Republicans and Democrats want to try to come together and change that?

Conservative voter: They've been saying that for a hundred years . . . But go back to the baser, and that is if you lack the morals, then you're going to break the law. If you break the law, you are more likely to go to prison. Most people—black, white, red, any other color—that are in prison, are there because of a bad moral decision.

Hockenberry: There are folks who say that the accumulative effect of slavery, and then what happened during Jim Crow . . . has produced a series of, kind of, moral and spiritual scars, and also a lack of opportunity, that we're just now getting to deal with. Is there anything that we need to do now to compensate for that history?

Conservative voter: I'm a card-carrying Indian . . . so my ancestors were on the Trail of Tears with the Cherokee tribe. I'm also Irish, and the Irish were getting whopped up on by the English for hundreds of years. I don't have those scars; I grew up. And when I grew up I took responsibility for myself, I didn't blame what happened on my grandfather three generations back. (Hockenberry)

While this conservative is of course only one example, he does not seem to be alone in his thinking. In a recent interview, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson made a statement expressing similar views with regards to individual agency: "I think poverty to a large extent is also a state of mind. You take somebody that has the right mindset, you can take everything from them and put them on the street, and I guarantee in a little while they'll be right back up there. . . . And you take somebody with the wrong mindset, you can give them everything in the world, they'll work their

way right back down to the bottom” (DelReal).

### Heidegger contra Descartes

Thus far I have merely given a descriptive analysis of the political situation. The philosophical question, however, remains: Which conception of subjectivity is more accurate? Without a doubt, the view of the subject as an autonomous and rational agent—which, as demonstrated above, is pervasive in the conservative worldview—has more philosophical history on its side. Already in Plato’s doctrine of the Forms, philosophy begins with a notion of the subject as a rational being that can think its way to pure and unchanging truth. This emphasis on the human faculty of reason in obtaining truth—in addition to an elevation of humans as superior to non-human animals—becomes codified when Aristotle’s definition of man as the *zoon logon echon* is translated in Scholastic philosophy as “*animal rationale*.” The view of the subject as a rational agent elevated above and against the world reaches its apotheosis, however, in the work of René Descartes. While Descartes represents a break from Scholasticism and the emergence of the modern era, he nonetheless inherits much of the language and concepts of the tradition. Descartes’ work is of particular importance not only for understanding this development in the tradition, but also the subsequent impact his influence over modernism has had on American political thought. Here Alexis de Tocqueville’s quip that “*America is . . . one of the countries in the world where philosophy is least studied, and where the precepts of Descartes are best applied*” is as relevant as ever (489).

Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy*, which Heidegger calls “the book grounding modern philosophy,” begins as an attempt to find certain knowledge on which the rest of philosophy can be built (*Parmenides* 8). In order to secure this type of certain knowledge, Descartes begins the *Meditations* by submitting his previously held beliefs to a pro-

cess of radical doubt. In the first Meditation, Descartes' project to find an indisputable truth seems destined to fail; his empirical claims about the world collapse rather easily, as Descartes is forced to acknowledge that his senses have often deceived him—in fact, they deceive him every night when he dreams. From here, he turns to his purely rational beliefs. While these at first seem to have more stable footing, Descartes again concedes that although he has always believed that  $2 + 3 = 5$ , it is entirely possible that an Evil Genius has been deceiving him this whole time. He thus states towards the end of the First Meditation that “of all the opinions that I once accepted as true, there is not one which not now legitimately open to doubt” (Descartes 99).

It is not until the Second Meditation that Descartes has his famous epiphany: “*I am, I exist*, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind” (103).<sup>4</sup> Although he may be able to doubt all his previously held beliefs about the world, the one thing he cannot doubt is that he is doubting. Even if a God or an evil demon is deceiving him, this only further proves that Descartes is in fact thinking and existing. While Descartes ultimately builds several arguments on this conclusion in the following meditations—including an argument for the existence of God—what is perhaps most relevant when considering the legacy of Cartesian subjectivity is the way this conclusion leads Descartes to distinguish between “thinking things” (*res cogitans*) and “corporeal substances” (*res extensa*). Descartes further concludes that as a thinking thing that certainly exist, he must essentially be this *res cogitans*, which he names his “soul.” The result is a radical distinction between mind and body; not just one's own body, but also between the thinker and the exterior world. Ultimately

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<sup>4</sup> While Descartes is perhaps more famous for the phrase *cogito ergo sum* (“I think therefore I am”), which appears in *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), he never actually uses this phrase in the *Meditations*. In the quotation above, the Latin phrase is: *ego sum, ego existo, quoties a me profertur, vel mente concipitur, necessario esse verum*.

Descartes draws a picture of subjectivity in which the thinking agent stands over and against the merely physical world.

As Tocqueville noted, the success of Cartesianism in shaping the American understanding of subjectivity has been nearly absolute. Perhaps no other philosopher has done more to shape the default understanding of subjectivity while also attracting the criticism of nearly every major philosopher in the following centuries. The critique formulated by Martin Heidegger in his magnum opus *Being and Time*, however, is particularly relevant to this analysis for two reasons. First, the 1927 publication of *Being and Time* exerted a monumental influence over the rest of the twentieth-century philosophy. The influence is immediately present, for example, in the title of Jean Paul Sartre's magnum opus *Being and Nothingness* (1943), and again in Emmanuel Levinas's conviction that it will never be possible to return to "a philosophy that would be Pre-Heideggerian" (Levinas 19). Secondly, what is unique to Heidegger's analysis as opposed to many purely negative criticisms is the positive account of "worldhood" that follows. While a similar exercise might be performed by turning to the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, whose place in the history of philosophy and influence over postmodernism are arguably comparable with Heidegger's, Nietzsche is not as explicitly clear as to what ontological formulation of subjectivity should replace Descartes' *cogito*.

At the center of Heidegger's critique is the claim that Descartes' *Meditations* begin with certain preconceptions about the subject and its relationship with the world "so that the phenomenon of the world in general no longer comes into view" (Heidegger, 2008, 122). While Descartes' project of radical self-doubt may seem innocent enough, upon further reflection it actually requires a significant amount of effort on his part to tear himself from his immediate world. Descartes ends up constructing a subject that only a philosopher can imagine.

On the other hand, Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*



begins by interpreting Dasein<sup>5</sup> hermeneutically, i.e., by interpreting Dasein within its world-historical context. According to Heidegger, we cannot simply “wipe the slate clean” as Descartes would have it and begin our interpretation anew. Rather, Dasein is already “thrown” into the world and finds itself within a finite set of historically conditioned possibilities. As Heidegger tells us, Dasein is not the basis of its own being; we did not choose when, where, or whether to be born. It is this “thrown” aspect of subjectivity that Descartes overlooks in attempting to philosophize from square one in the *Meditations*. While Descartes can certainly submit his beliefs to theoretical doubt, what he cannot escape is that he is already philosophizing within a horizon of possibilities. In other words, Descartes is necessarily confined to philosophizing within a certain tradition that far precedes him, in a langue that contains concepts and questions of which he is merely the recipient.

Therefore, Heidegger is adamant that the subject is not a “thing” that can simply be separated off from its world. Instead Dasein is always “being-in-the-world,” where “the world” is understood as a state of Dasein’s being rather than as a separate entity over and against which Dasein exists. As Heidegger describes it, “There is no such thing as the ‘side-by-side-ness’ of an entity called ‘Dasein’ with another entity called ‘world’” but rather “Being-in-the-world is a state of Dasein which is necessary *a priori*” (81; 79). In other words, Dasein is always a being that is inextricably bound up in a world-historical situation. As previously mentioned, part of what it means to be in a situation for Heidegger is to have

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<sup>5</sup> Heidegger will, of course, insist that “Dasein,” the German word meaning “existence,” is not synonymous with the human being, and should not be treated as another word for “consciousness” or “human subject.” The word is chosen by Heidegger solely to indicate our special relationship with Being, which is one of understanding. However, while there is much scholarship around who (or what) qualifies as Dasein, for the purposes of exposition it will be sufficient to think of the term “Dasein” as referring to none other than human beings (or the human subject) though this is not strictly its meaning.

certain “possibilities for being.” Possibilities, as necessarily future oriented and conditioned by the past, describe the temporal nature of Dasein’s being. For example, as a student, I might have the possibility of becoming a doctor—something futural. This possibility, however, is necessarily shaped by previous history, e.g., the fact that I received a high school education; that there was money available for me to attend college; that I live in a society that has a systematic practice of medicine, etc. Heidegger therefore describes Dasein as having “ecstatic” temporality, i.e., being “stretched” from its birth to its death.<sup>6</sup> Dasein quite literally *is* these possibilities, and therefore any interpretation of Dasein must be understood on the basis of its historically conditioned and future-oriented possibilities.

Descartes’ analysis, however, attempts to treat the subject as something separate from its possibilities, and therefore separate from its world. This is why, though Descartes thinks he has been successful in doubting the world as such, Heidegger points out that he has merely taken aim at entities *within the world*. Heidegger sets up the challenge in the following way:

Does [Descartes’] ontology of the “world” seek the phenomenon of the world at all, and if not, does it at least define some entity within-the-world fully enough so that the worldly character of this entity can be made visible in it? *To both questions we must answer no.* The entity which Descartes is trying to grasp ontologically . . . is proximally ready-to-hand—Nature. (128)

By “Nature” Heidegger simply means those entities within the world which make up our environment. Heidegger argues

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<sup>6</sup> “Dasein does not fill up a track or stretch ‘of life’—one which is somehow present-at-hand—with the phases of its momentary actualities. It stretches *itself* along in such a way that its own Being is constituted in advance as a stretching-along” (426).

that Descartes' confusion of entities that exist *in the world* with *being* the world as such results from an attempt to cognize all beings *mathematically*. In other words, Descartes does not extend his project of radical doubt far enough to doubt that perhaps there is a dimension to the entities in consideration that is not immediately graspable. As Heidegger puts it, "Mathematical knowledge is regarded by Descartes as the one manner of apprehending entities which can always give assurance that their Being has been securely grasped" (128). The problem with representing entities in this way, however, is that it "prescribes for the world its 'real' Being" as purely something that can be understood scientifically with the senses (129). The physical senses, however, "do not enable us to cognize any entity in its Being; they merely serve to announce the ways in which 'Things' within the world are useful or harmful for human creatures encumbered with bodies" (129). From this Heidegger concludes that no investigation that takes its starting point from entities within-the-world will ever reach the phenomenon of the world as such. In other words, by treating the world as an entity rather than as a state of Dasein's being, Descartes never actually doubts the world as such; he merely doubts entities within-the-world.

In describing Dasein as being-in-the-world, and therefore operating within a finite set of possibilities, a question may emerge for the careful reader: Is Dasein nothing more than these possibilities? In other words, can Dasein simply be explained in terms of its possibilities? If so, it would seem to follow that Dasein does not have *any* freedom, and in turn lacks moral agency. This is a difficult question—one that is often not discussed in mainstream politics—both for philosophers and liberal progressives who want to explain the subject in terms of its relationships. A fully deterministic picture of subjectivity would seem to absolve not only the underprivileged murderer but also the corrupt CEO of any responsibility. Heidegger's answer to the question of freedom is likely unsatisfying for most; he often speaks of a "freedom *for*" cer-

tain possibilities, but never a “freedom to” in terms of the traditional conception of willing. As Heidegger puts it

In all metaphysics, the essence of freedom is understood in essential relation to the ‘will,’ of a power of the soul, i.e. understood in terms of human comportment. But for us now it is a question of thinking the essence of freedom in essential unity with the most primordial concept of *aletheia* and indeed with a view to elucidating the essence of the open. (Heidegger, 1998, 143)

While explaining what Heidegger means here by “the concept of *aletheia*” and “the essence of the open” is well beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting the perhaps unsettling place these types of “postmodern” analyses may lead. And while the discomfort that many commentators feel in the face of such a deterministic picture of subjectivity has often been the center of many ad hoc arguments against both liberalism and postmodernism, perhaps it is a discomfort we should be more readily confronting. Even before Heidegger, it is Nietzsche who identifies our suspect motives for wanting to ascribe free will to the subject—namely, that it emerges out of our desire to punish.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that modern philosophy has exerted a monumental influence over American political thought. As progressive liberals begin moving towards more postmodern explanations of subjectivity, however, it is necessary to understand the philosophical grounds that such analyses stand on and the consequences they may entail. By returning to the work of the twentieth-century philosopher Martin Heidegger

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<sup>7</sup> See Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*: “Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct of wanting to judge and punish which is at work” (499).

and his critique of René Descartes, I have attempted to show why modern notions of subjectivity that isolate the subject from its world begin with certain flawed preconceptions about what it means to be in a world. As Heidegger puts it, to be a subject means that we are already thrown into a historical situation that far precedes us, and that this history further shapes our future possibilities for being. By interpreting the world as a state of being rather than as one entity among others, Heidegger avoids the problem of having to forcibly construct a subject, and instead opens up the possibility for interpreting subjectivity in a world-historical context. This way of understanding the subject in terms of its possibilities provides philosophical justification for interpreting the subject within its worldly (*weltlich*) context, i.e., accounting for social, political, economic, geographic, and other historical factors. While the indebtedness of later twentieth-century philosophers to *Being and Time* is a testament to the significance of this discovery, the full consequences of Heidegger's thought, especially within American political thought, are yet to be explored. Perhaps what is still necessary is to engage in the task of thinking for which Heidegger himself says he has merely prepared the way.

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# Femicide in Juárez, Mexico

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According to an Amnesty International report released in 2003, approximately 370 women had been murdered in Juárez, Mexico, in the previous decade (Amnesty International 1). Starting around 1993, several cases emerged in which women in the city were kidnapped, tortured, raped, and subsequently murdered. Their bodies were dumped in the deserts or fields for the public eye and often displayed signs of extreme mutilation such as bitten off nipples or cut clitorises. The grotesque nature of these murders and the specific targeting of women in the region have created questions as to whether these incidents are simply the result of normalized violence in Juárez or if they are an example of what some human rights activists and organizations have called “femicide.” According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, femicide is “a crime involving the violent and deliberate killing of a woman” (par. 4). Was the rise of femicide in Juárez in the 1990s motivated by one factor or a multitude of factors? Was it strictly domestic factors or were there global players involved? This paper will demonstrate how both global factors and domestic factors have caused and continue to perpetuate extreme violence against women in Juárez, Mexico.

## **The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**

As previously mentioned, the rise of femicide in Juárez began around 1993, roughly the same time that the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was passed. The NAFTA

agreement was negotiated by the governments of Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and implemented in 1994 in order to reshape the economic relations between the three countries (McBride and Sergie par. 1-2). When the NAFTA negotiations commenced in 1991, one primary goal was to integrate better Mexico into the United States' and Canada's more highly developed and high wage economies (par. 3). By implementing freer trade, it was hoped that Mexico's economy would improve, subsequently providing the country's workforce with new jobs and opportunities while decreasing the amount of illegal migration flowing from Mexico (par. 3). NAFTA was negotiated by President H. W. Bush, later passed through Congress with bipartisan support, and ultimately implemented under President Bill Clinton (par. 2). Economists have highlighted the benefits of this agreement on these countries' economies such as a sharp increase in regional trade from about \$290 billion in 1993 to \$1.1 trillion in 2016, as well as the U.S. increasing its foreign direct investment stock in Mexico from \$15 billion to more than \$100 billion (par. 6).

Despite these benefits, however, there has been sharp criticism of NAFTA. Many argue that the agreement further invited U.S. and Canadian companies to move into Mexico to take advantage of the lower cost of labor in the country. Before NAFTA, Mexico, like many other Latin American countries during this time, used the Import Substitution Industrial (ISI) economic model. The ISI model sought to protect domestic industries as well as to have a confined national market (Council on Hemispheric Affairs par. 3). Once NAFTA was implemented, the Mexican government was obligated to "open the country's market to foreign exchange and foreign investment," which made the government more receptive to welcoming outside companies to run their businesses in the country (par. 3). Although the Mexican government strove for the integration of local industries into the international market, the majority of these small to medium-sized factories did not have the most current and innovative technology re-



quired to reach this goal (par. 3). While many Mexican factories adopted these new technologies, they did not prosper as much as the Mexican government had envisioned (par. 3). However, a chain of factories that flourished post-NAFTA implemented a major domestic factor that contributed to the rise of femicide in the city: the maquiladoras.

## **Maquiladoras**

Maquiladoras are foreign-owned factories established in Mexico, whose exports are eventually shipped back to the country from which the company originated, such as the United States. Six years after the implementation of NAFTA, factory employment in the maquiladora industry in Mexico increased by 110 percent; this is compared to 78 percent in the preceding six years (Gruben 11). In 2004, there were approximately 400 maquiladora factories operating in Juárez (Osborn 20). The Mexico Solidarity Network states that NAFTA gradually removed most trade and investment controls over the course of a decade with the goal of integrating the economies of the U.S., Mexico, and Canada (Luevano 70). Subsequently, “U.S. companies can (then) produce goods south of their border, taking advantage of minimal taxes and abundant cheap labor” (70). Some prominent U.S. companies with established maquiladoras in Juárez and Chihuahua include Ford, General Electric, General Motors, RCA, and Chrysler (Gupta 36).

With the rise of employment opportunities for citizens in Juárez during this period, came an influx of people from across Chihuahua and Mexico to seek work in the city (Luevano 71). However, the work conditions were substandard with the salary being “approximately four to five dollars a day, with minimal if any benefits, and no union representation” (71). As migrants increasingly moved to the city for employment opportunities, the once-empty outskirts became shanty towns which often lacked electricity and contained few infrastructural services (71). In 2003, Juárez was the most

heavily populated city in Chihuahua (Amnesty International 2). According to Chabat, the overcrowding of the area resulted in “an increase of chaos and violence” (Panther 37). Overcrowding can have detrimental effects on a country’s population. Nigeria, for example, has the sixth largest population in the world. It is also one of the fastest growing nations, which has made resident cities, such as Lagos, very congested (The Borgen Project par. 1-3). This overcrowding not only resulted in cramped living conditions, but also led to the rise of militant groups such as Boko Haram as well as an overall increase in crime (The Borgen Project par. 4). Therefore, an increasing population with limited resources can cause competition for these scarce resources that is often violent nature. The persistence of a violent atmosphere can lead to the targeting of vulnerable citizens in society, such as women. With the same conditions applied to Juárez, one can see how the large migration of people to the city, combined with a lack of necessary resources, helps to create an environment in which violence against women is likely to occur.

One of the positive effects of these maquiladoras was the opportunity for women in Juárez to work outside of the home. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, “Mexican women have lower levels of education and lower literacy rates than males” (Pantaleo 351). Pantaleo states that women went to these factories because they saw these maquiladora jobs as the only opportunity to work (351). Additionally, maquiladora employers usually sought out female employees in the belief that women would be less likely to unionize or strike for better pay (Osborn 20). Although the maquiladoras provided job opportunities for women in Juárez, it was often under the assumption by the employers that they could exploit these women for their labor and profit.

According to the Organization of American States’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, most of the victims of femicide were maquiladora workers as well as “relative newcomers to Ciudad Juárez who had migrated from other

areas of Mexico” (Council on Hemispheric Affairs par. 6). One of the prime factors believed to play a part in the murders of these women is the public transportation system that many utilized to go to their jobs. Many maquiladoras operate twenty-four hours a day with white buses constantly traversing local neighborhoods to pick up the women for their shifts (Gupta 36). Though these transportation services are greatly utilized, they normally do not offer adequate security. In 2005, US Federal News asserted there were only few corporations that “offered private bus transportation to and from work, required background checks on all bus drivers, and offered security awareness programs. However, the majority of corporations did little or nothing to ensure the safety of their employees” (Panther 42). Furthermore, rather than dropping off these women at their homes, the bus drivers would normally drop off them off in a nearby area (Gupta 36). This forced women to “walk the unlit streets, where many are kidnapped” (36). Thus, the combination of inadequate security as well as the necessity to walk long-distances to their home put these women in a vulnerable position open to kidnapping and violence.

NAFTA may have been crafted with the intention of elevating Mexico’s economy. However, the looser economic and trade policies further enabled U.S. companies to establish maquiladoras in Mexico and take advantage of the cheap labor, especially female workers. While maquiladoras are not unique to Juárez, the combination of violent restlessness from overcrowding, the steady stream of female workers, and the lack of security in transportation systems created the grounds for femicide to occur.

## **Narco Wars**

NAFTA was not the only global factor that influenced the rise of femicide in the 1990s. Increased trade with Colombian drug cartels in Juárez also played a key component to the spike of violence. According to the *Journal of Feminist Studies*

in *Religion*, Rafael Luevano hypothesizes a collaboration between Colombian and Mexican drug cartels that laid down plans “on how to smuggle their contraband into the United States” (71). According to Lourdes Portillo, a writer and director of films focusing on the search for Latino identity, the United States “is the largest consumer of illegal drugs in the world” (Luevano 71). Robert Almonte, a former narcotics detective, states this plan involved Colombian cartels exporting their drugs to Mexican cartels, who subsequently transfer the drugs into the United States (Luevano 71). Because 70 percent of the cocaine that enters the United States comes from Mexico, the Mexico Solidarity Network asserts that “it is almost impossible to overestimate the corrupting influence of the narco-trafficking dollars upon the Mexican government” (Luevano 71-72). Pantaleo believes “drug cartels and others involved with drug trafficking may be responsible for many of the murders of female sweatshop workers as well as other murders of Mexican citizens” (352). The Mexican government and the country’s authorities have been criticized by organizations such as Amnesty International and the United Nations for their failure to establish more investigatory efforts into the disappearance and murders of young women in Juárez, especially when some offenders may be linked to the drug trade (Gupta 37).

Drug cartels and narco-traffickers have been able to accumulate a great amount of power and influence over both the Mexican government and authorities due to the profit they gain from selling drugs. In the case of Juárez, the city is used by drug cartels and narco-traffickers as an avenue to promote their drug trade. The power accumulated by drug cartels and narco-traffickers has resulted in their immunity from prosecution and further criminal investigations that may connect them to the violent murders of young women in Juárez. Both the power these groups have and their desire to suppress any threat to their businesses enable them to continue committing violence against women in the city. In addition, their

power means there is little chance that they will face legal repercussions for their crimes.

### **Police Corruption**

The protection that drug cartels and narco-traffickers possess has also resulted in another domestic factor contributing to a rise in femicide: police corruption. Drug cartels and narco-traffickers are not the only ones immune from investigations as there appears to be disinterest by the police to investigate any perpetrators whatsoever of femicide. According to Wright, political and consumer organizations on both domestic and international levels have pressured Mexican political leaders and international corporations that conduct their business in Mexico to take measures to prevent femicide from occurring (712). However, elites in the political and corporate realm were dismissive of the idea that these murders were indicative of “a political or economic problem” and asserted that the victims of these murders did not warrant this level of attention (712). Nathan and Wright claim this same sentiment was echoed by police forces who often told the victim’s family and friends that these women were likely to have led “double lives” (Wright 714) and that there was very little that could be done. The use of the term “double lives” is an attempt to suggest that these women secretly engaged in prostitution and other deviant acts to shift the blame onto the women rather than investigate possible perpetrators. The accusation that these women led double lives that ultimately caused their deaths enables the police to withdraw their responsibility to investigate these murders. Subsequently, perpetrators of femicide are able to continue committing these crimes without any threat of punishment.

Osborn states that when the authorities do demonstrate some interest in pursuing femicide cases, there has been “evidence of cover-ups, planting of evidence, falsified forensic reports and brutality” (22). In 1995, shortly after the cases of femicide started to rise, authorities claimed they found the

person responsible for the murders: Egyptian-born engineer Abdel Latif Sharif (22). Sharif was a worker at a local maquiladora and was charged with a young female's rape and murder in the area (22). Although he was initially only linked to one case, authorities claimed that they could link him to several other murders (22). Even while Sharif was in prison, the murders continued and the police claimed that he was orchestrating them from prison (22). Ultimately, the case was dropped and in 1999 the police reported they had arrested four maquiladora shuttle bus drivers who supposedly admitted to murdering twenty women on behalf of Sharif (22). However, the bus drivers claimed that they were forced to confess by beatings and torture (22). In the end, none of the bus drivers were convicted (22).

A similar situation happened in 2001 when "Javier Garcia Uribe and Gustavo Gonzalez Meza, two local bus drivers, were picked up by the police and said to have confessed to the murders of eight women" (Osborn 22). Like the claims of the four bus drivers previously mentioned, both men asserted "they were tortured and only confessed to save their lives" (22). Photographs of the two men taken after their confession showed signs of "cigarette burns and welts all over their bodies" (22). One month later, a medical report released by the Juárez prison director indicated that an electric prod had been used to torture the two suspects (22). Two days later, the same prison director resigned (22). Osborn states that since Uribe and Meza's case, the police failed to produce any physical evidence that would indicate the bus drivers were linked to the murders (22).

The actions of the police force in Juárez prove that it had little to no intention of discovering the true perpetrators of femicide, which it often excused as the result of the supposed behavior of the victims. The instances when the police did pursue investigatory action, such as the case with Abdel Latif Sharif, Javier Garcia Uribe, and Gustavo Gonzalez, further demonstrate that the police resort to taking short cuts in order to elicit false confessions from suspects. Both responses

by the police do nothing to stop femicide in Juárez. Either there is a reluctance for further investigations or the police end up charging the wrong people through forced confessions. As the police in Juárez continue to ignore concrete evidence, the perpetrators of femicide continue to go unpunished, enabling violence against women in the city to continue.

### **Machismo Culture**

While the factors previously discussed have focused on specific institutions that have enabled violence against women, an important societal and domestic factor that has contributed to femicide in the city is machismo culture. According to Panther, machismo is an “exaggerated sense of masculinity based on the dominance of women” (4). Much like patriarchy, machismo has been deeply integrated into Mexican society where the favoring of men over women is seen daily. For example, when women go to the police to file a complaint that they had been beaten or raped by their husbands, usually male police officers will tell the women that this is an affair concerning her and her husband and choose not to intervene (Panther 12). Like a booming population, a machismo society creates an atmosphere that is not only tolerant of but supports violence against women.

Luevano states that most of the women who had been murdered came from “an emerging class of working women in Mexico” (72). In the context of traditional patriarchal societies, a woman working outside of the home puts her safety at risk since she is violating traditional gender roles (72). Because the maquiladoras enabled women to work outside of the home, traditional gender roles in Juárez were challenged, a situation that may have resulted in violent reactions by men in the society. Luevano states that “it is common for men to seek ways to continue to assert their power over women, and that this sometimes results in violence or murder” (75).

Therefore, the rise in femicide may be a reaction of this violation of traditional gender roles and machismo culture where Mexican men feel the need to assert their masculinity in order to compensate for the change of gender roles. The conditions of the female cadavers are indicative of a deep, dehumanization hatred perpetrators have for their victims reflecting the frustration of their masculinity.

There is also the perpetuation of the “good girls” versus “bad girls” dichotomy by authorities in Juárez that labels girls who conform to traditional gender roles as being the former and those that do not as being the latter. In 1995, the then governor of Chihuahua, Francisco Barrio, told parents not to allow their daughters to go out at night and to closely monitor them (Council on Hemispheric Affairs sec.3). This statement implies that women who do go out at night run the risk of being endangered, which removes any responsibility for men and the authorities from pursuing further action on their part to investigate these murders, again shifting the blame onto the victim. The media also perpetuates this narrative by emphasizing the identity of the women rather than the crime that was committed. The emphasis on the woman’s identity can result in media consumers placing higher value on women who conform to the “good girl” archetype (sec. 3). Simultaneously, this overlooks, and even justifies, the murders of women who supposedly did not fit that archetype (sec. 3).

In sum, machismo culture in Juárez plays a role in the creation of a violent atmosphere in the city that results in egregious acts committed against women. The shifting gender roles that resulted from women seeking low-paying maquiladoras jobs may have provoked a vicious reaction by men who see their dominance over women as being threatened. Because the female maquiladoras workers are paid low wages by their employers, they are left without any means to seek resources to protect themselves from violence in the city, such as buying their own vehicles or moving out of the city.



These vulnerable women in Juárez have few resources to prevent violence from being committed on them, and must remain in an environment that actively seeks to harm them if they do not adhere to the strict gender roles of the city.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Both global and domestic factors have played a role in the rise and maintenance of femicide in Juárez, Mexico. Beginning in the early 1990s with the passage of NAFTA, the loosening of trade barriers between the U.S. and Mexico enabled the former to establish factories to exploit a population desperate for any sort of income. The flood of workers into Juárez to take advantage of these new jobs compressed the city's already limited resources and further provoked a restless atmosphere in which violence is more likely to occur. The maquiladoras have particularly attracted female workers who see these jobs as opportunities to provide for themselves. Since the jobs at the maquiladoras do not offer much pay or benefits, there is little possibility these women are able to afford taking a safer means of transportation or moving to a city with safer conditions. In addition, the unsafe bus routes that some women used to travel to and from work have made them more vulnerable to being kidnapped, molested, and murdered. There is little motivation to accurately investigate these murders or ensure the safety of women in Juárez due to the lack of police accountability. The legal protections drug cartels and narco-traffickers have accumulated also enable these crimes against women to continue. Lastly, machismo culture in Juárez has exasperated the situation by shifting the blame onto the murdered women. In addition, the justification of violence completely removes responsibility from the perpetrators and the police. The violence that women in Juárez face is not the result of one singular factor but the culmination of both domestic and global players that have caused the city to become an environment where women are vulnerable to extreme acts of violence. It is therefore necessary to

address all the factors presented to combat the reality of the situation that women in Juárez confront on a daily basis.

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# What Was Art?

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German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel argued that the content of art has transcended its form, as it has begun attempting to represent and encapsulate more than it is capable of (Danto 130). Building upon this thought, Arthur Danto similarly argues that art has evolved to do something it had not before; it has begun to *create* the world, rather than imitate the world. To do so, art has become absolutely free in its scope and definition. However, it seems that this is not necessarily the case; rather than becoming free, art has ceased to exist. Instead, what we now experience are merely the expression of “what art was.” It is a simulation, to use Baudrillard’s terminology, of what art used to be in the absence of a concrete existence and definition of *what art is*.

In his publication “The Artworld,” Danto begins by focusing on the idea that, although powerful, the Imitation Theory of Art lost its viability as a theory of art due to the lack of necessary and sufficient conditions to serve as a basis to define “what art is.” Under this theory, which had been the predominant theory of art, works are to be considered as artworks if they are imitative of reality. An example of this would be a landscape painting; there would be no doubt that this painting is a painting of a particular landscape, which it imitates. However, if a work that is imitative of reality is to be considered an artwork, then that would allow not only mirrors, but any sort of reflection to be considered as works of art. Take, for example, the reflection of the individual’s body on a window; this is an imitation of reality as it is reproducing something found in reality, namely, the individual’s physical

body, their clothes, and so forth. Yet, this imitation is unsuccessful as the body is flipped or distorted in some way, emphasizing some physical characteristics while minimizing others, and therefore distorting the appearance of the body as it appears in reality. Because of these distortions of reality, the reflection is an imperfect imitation of reality. Hence, just like works of art, reflections unsuccessfully imitate aspects of reality, and would thus be considered imitative art. Based on this argument, Danto concludes by saying that the condition “‘is an imitation’ will not do as a sufficient condition for ‘is art’” (Danto 571), as such a condition would allow non-artworks, such as reflections, to be considered as artworks by mistake. This allows Danto to propose a new theory of art more akin to theories of science, where there are necessary and sufficient conditions to determine “what art is.” Danto calls this the Reality Theory of Art, which defines an artwork as a work that successfully creates “real forms” (Danto 573). Reusing the example of a landscape, under the Reality Theory, when one views this landscape painting, one does not think of the landscape but rather the painting itself. In other words, it is the painting that creates the idea of the landscape, which then inserts itself into reality. Because any work can be thought of as creating reality, works considered as artworks under the Imitation Theory will similarly be considered as artworks under this theory, as Danto wishes to keep what he sees as “the old theory’s competence” (Danto 573). Danto supports this retention of art-status even when moving to a new theory by making a comparison to movements in science, where “we often accommodate new facts to old theories via auxiliary hypotheses [. . .] when the theory in question is deemed too valuable to be jettisoned at once” (Danto 572).

The problem with this approach is that Danto does not consider how the subject matter of the theory changes when moving from a non-scientific and subjective theory to a scientific and objective theory. Take, for example, Sigmund Freud’s theory of the mind: this theory emphasizes the roles

played by, and particularly the interactions and conflicts between, the id, ego, and superego—three levels of the human mind that determine behavior. While his ideas were foundational to the field of psychology, most modern psychologists disregard these ideas due to their frequent failure to hold up to empirical standards (Stangor, 630-631). Due to the lack of scientific rigor and testability behind Freud's theory of mind, the field of psychology has over time adapted and altered it to better suit empirical results (Stangor, 631). Hence, the move from non-scientific to a scientific standard has caused the original theory to become inaccurate. Because Freud's theories were non-scientific, attempting to expand on them within a scientific framework made them no longer precise for describing the subject. This is due to a fundamental change in subject matter; the change from the mind as defined by Freud to the mind as defined by modern, empirical psychology and research. The main point, however, is that these two theories of mind—Freudian and psychological—do not focus on the same subject, despite coming from the same source. In comparison, fields of thought that did not attempt to move to such scientific standards—e.g., the field of literary criticism—do not undergo the same discreditation that Freud's theories did. In fields without such scientific standards, both psychological and Freudian could be true depending on how they are applied, as there are no empirical standards to determine whether or not the theory is accurate. This is a problem that Danto ignores when attempting to move from the Imitation Theory to the Reality Theory; subject matter within the first, non-scientific theory may not necessarily remain subject matter when moving to the second, scientific theory. In other words, "what art is" under the Imitation Theory, while seemingly similar to "what art is" under the Reality Theory, may in fact hold different definitions. If this is true, art under the Reality Theory would be "Rt", different from "Art" as defined by the Imitation Theory. To ask, "What is art?" under the Reality Theory is to assume "Art" and "Rt" are one and the same, then, when they need not be.

Danto gives reasons for this to be the case in his publication "The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense." Here, he explains how art has come to an end; the historical narrative of art has come to an end, as a full, complete narrative can only arise when there is a cessation of narrative (Danto 127). Or, as Danto himself puts it, "narrative itself is external to what it transcribes: otherwise a further narrative must be written which includes the writing of the first narrative among the events narrated" (Danto 127). Danto sets up a defense against this point, stating that the history of art is exempt from this status; that the narrative of the history of art "belongs to the same history that it analyzes, as if it, itself, is that history's end" (Danto 127). He goes on to state that, due to the end of art, true artistic expression now inhibits any new narrative, because if "everyone goes off in different directions, there is no longer a direction toward which a narrative can point" (Danto 128). This freedom, and lack of any subsequent grand narrative, is what Danto sees as "the state of the art world after the end of art" (Danto 128); art exists as in a "happily ever after," due the true freedom of artistic expression (Danto 128). Yet, it does not seem to make sense how art can exist without any clear definition of "what art is." In the past, under Imitation Theory, art was always defined by its relationship with reality. That is, art was defined by its imitation of reality. The end of the Imitation Theory, then, would mark the end of a narrative of art history. Danto appears to be saying that, with the end of this theory and the narrative, art is allowed to be anything, due to the absolute freedom given by the end of the narrative. At the same time, if art is allowed to be anything, it must therefore be necessarily nothing, as the total and absolute freedom of definition necessitates the lack of inherent definition. Danto says something along these lines, where his aim has been to "find a definition of art everywhere and always true" (Danto 128); a pluralistic theory where art is defined not by any intrinsic definition, but by the experience of the art, no matter what the artwork is. Danto's Reality Theory allows for this to be the case; if a work can be considered an

artwork as long as it successfully creates “real forms” (Danto 573), then any work can be found as creating a “real form,” allowing any work to be thought of as an artwork. If this is the case, then there must be an absence of an answer to the question “what is art?” as art lacks its “is” or “being” due to the end of the narrative of art, thereby lacking a present existence as something that holds an inherent definition.

Additionally, as mentioned before, the transition from Imitative Theory to Reality Theory concurrently changed the concept of “Art” to “Rt”; the subject matter which makes up art or under the Imitative Theory is not the same as the subject matter which makes up art or “Rt” under the Reality Theory. If this is the case, then it is not only a problem that artworks prior to the end of Imitative Theory are still considered to be artworks under Reality Theory, but additionally that these artworks can still be considered artworks when art cannot exist. To what do we refer when we say “art,” if art has become “Rt,” and “Rt” no longer exists after the end of Imitative Theory?

Jean Baudrillard, similarly to Danto, was influenced by Warhol’s works (Carrier 101), and studied semiotics—the study of the signifying and the signified. A good example of signifying/signified relationship is René Magritte’s “The Treachery of Images.” When the viewer sees the pipe, her or she understands it to be a pipe. Yet, as the caption tells the viewer, it is not a pipe—it is an *image* of a pipe that *signifies* the actual pipe. The artwork, then, can be seen as a commentary on the Imitative Theory; while the viewer would take the pipe to be a representation of an actual pipe, it actually is not. It is merely a drawing of a something, taken to be a pipe by the viewer, and nothing more. Thus, when speaking of art, Baudrillard states that the “painting is a signed object as much as it is a painted surface” (Baudrillard and Levin 102). In other words, by representing and signifying something, the painting serves a similar role as the pipe; both serve to represent and point toward a particular idea, and thus serve as sig-



nifying objects. He mentions two types of representations inherent in artworks; imitative representation, and non-imitative or reality-creating representation. He describes the first type existing in a world “in which all things are representation,” making the purpose of art “only to describe” the reality that exists (Baudrillard and Levin 103). This can be understood as a reworded definition of the Imitative Theory, where all art serves merely as a representation of what exists in reality. (Again, think of the painting of the landscape, which is a representation of the landscape itself.) He then continues by saying that “the conjecture of values is entirely different . . . the [artwork] becomes the original” (Baudrillard and Levin 104). This, similarly, can be understood as a reworded definition of the Reality Theory, where, rather than the artwork imitating reality, the artwork serves as the basis for reality. Think of the painting of the landscape where this time the painting creates an image that is brought to mind when thinking of the landscape rather than bringing to mind the landscape itself. Thus, Baudrillard is saying something very similar to Danto; art used to serve as a representation of reality, but now reality has begun to serve as a representation of art.

In his essay “Transaesthetics,” Baudrillard continues this line of thought but takes it further by stating not only that “art is gone” (Baudrillard 15), but also that “is as though art and artistic inspiration had entered a kind of stasis—as though everything which had developed magnificently over several centuries had suddenly been immobilized, paralyzed by its own image and its own riches” (Baudrillard 16). It seems that the “stasis” he referred to was caused by the transition from the Imitative Theory to the Reality Theory, where “art has disappeared as a symbolic pact,” i.e., lost its ability to serve as a representation of reality, and has instead become “something that can no longer transcend itself and has therefore turned in upon itself” (Baudrillard 16). Despite maintaining its status as a symbol, necessitating that it must, therefore, signify *something*, art has ceased to represent aspects of

reality and instead has begun to create aspects of reality (Baudrillard 18-19). The problem then becomes that art becomes a manufacturing of images “*in which there is nothing to see*” (Baudrillard 18). That is, the artwork does not signify or represent anything evident in reality, as art can no longer imitate reality. Instead, art creates reality, which means there is nothing behind the artwork; it is pure farce. Consider Marcel Duchamp’s “Fountain.” This work shows a simple porcelain urinal lying on its side, with the signature “R. Mutt, 1917.” In contrast to a landscape painting, one cannot say what the urinal is meant to represent. Under the Imitative Theory, the landscape would be an artwork—as it represents some aspect of reality, and there is something that can be *seen* in the artwork—while the urinal would not be considered an artwork, as it does not appear to represent any aspect of reality. Under the Reality Theory, both of these works would be considered artworks in that they create some aspect of reality—the landscape creating the idea of “the landscape in the painting,” and the urinal creating the idea of “the urinal with someone’s handwriting on it.” Yet, it is exactly because they create aspects of reality that there is nothing to be seen in the artwork, as, unlike under the Imitative Theory, the “meaning” of these works has no basis in reality and thus merely signifies something that does not exist in reality, such as the manufactured landscape or the manufactured urinal with someone’s handwriting on it. Because these ideas are created by the artworks, these ideas are not inherent in reality. The result of this is that modern artworks appear to signify something, yet, behind this presentation, they signify nothing in reality.

One cause of this façade, according to Baudrillard, is that “art seeks to duplicate itself by means of simulation” (Baudrillard 18). If art has ceased to be “Art,” and has begun to be the non-existing “Rt,” how are works still to be considered as artworks? Danto and Baudrillard both have answers rooted in culture, but rely on different details to reach this conclusion. Danto argues that, with its background in art his-

tory, it is the artworld that determines what art is. The “art-world,” as defined by Danto, holds this function because an artwork cannot be an artwork without its working, in some way, to reverse what came before it—an action that requires knowledge of art history (Danto 580). Based on this, it seems as though a work becomes an artwork not due to any quality inherent in itself, but in comparison to other, previous artworks, thereby making the definition of “what art is” dependent on “what art was.” As described in a summary of Danto’s view, he sees “some of Warhol’s creations [as] physically indistinguishable from non-artworks” (Baudrillard and Levin 101), concluding that art cannot be defined as art by something inherent in it. Baudrillard, on the other hand, sees the cause as rooted in consumer culture, stating that, “[no] matter how marginal, or banal, or even obscene it may be, everything is subject to aestheticization, culturalization, museification” (Baudrillard 17). To Baudrillard, art has become a cultural commodity. an evolution that may correspond with the transition from the Imitative theory to the Reality Theory, thereby becoming “Rt” and ceasing to be “Art.” If so, then this art seeks to “mime its own disappearance”—cover up its own lack of existence—by duplicating itself with simulation of what it was. Because art can no longer represent, it simulates the act of representation, thereby making the definition of “what art is” dependent on “what art was,” similar to Danto’s argument. The definition of art, then, is art when it was still “Art”—when it was still imitative and representative of reality. This definition stands as the only concrete basis to which “Rt” can be compared in order to determine whether or not the work can be considered art, as, due to their indeterminate status as art, works of “Rt” cannot be compared to other works of “Rt”.

As a signifier, it then holds that art, under the Reality Theory (“Rt”), acts as a simulation of art under the Imitative Theory (“Art”). This is because the basis of “what art is” is founded upon “what art was.” We understand Marcel Duchamp’s “Fountain” as an artwork by understanding it in the context

of artworks such as the “Mona Lisa” or “Starry Night.” In other words, the only way to understand art under the Reality Theory (“Rt”) is to compare it to and simulate art under the Imitative Theory (“Art”), and to regard “Rt” as one and the same as “Art,” when these are two separate categories of work. Joseph J. Tanke, in the article “What Is the Aesthetic Regime?” arrived a similar conclusion when analyzing Jameson’s, Danto’s, and Baudrillard’s views on art: “art is led into a dead-end where its options are to satirize the arts of the past or to aestheticize the material of everyday life” (Tanke 77). In other words, because art has no concrete direction to develop, it is left with the options of satirizing the arts of the past—exaggeration and parody of art from the past—or aestheticizing material of everyday life—making non-art objects into works of art. Tanke, however, differentiates the two options as though they were not one and the same: by satirizing the arts of the past, one *must* aestheticize the material of everyday life; the arts of the past, such as the “Mona Lisa,” are a component of everyday life and culture. Similarly, by aestheticizing the material of everyday life, one *must* satirize the arts of the past; the creation and definition of art depends on the satirizing the arts of the past. Think again of Duchamp’s “Fountain”; not only is the work a clear aestheticization of material found in everyday life, the very idea that this work can be considered an artwork is satire of arts of the past. It asks the question “what is art?” inviting viewers to compare it to well-known artworks such as the “Mona Lisa.” It is, in other words, satirizing the idea that the viewer has a concrete idea of “what art is.” The work, therefore, depends on arts of the past as a method not only to satirize them but also to establish itself as an artwork.

This suggests that we experience art is not as “Art” but as “Rt,” an experience that is thought to be close to the experience of “Art,” but is fundamentally different in terms of its definition and subject matter. “Rt” however, makes it seem as though it is the same as “Art” by closing the gap between the two; “Rt” presents itself as being representative of reality

while, in actuality, it serves instead to create the reality it feigns to represent. When we think of art, we think of “Art,” which are works that imitate or represent reality in a sensuous manner. What we are truly experiencing, however, is the deception of “Rt”; “Art” has ceased to exist—art is no longer imitative—and what we are truly experiencing is “Rt”; a creation of reality, operating as a simulation of what “Art” once was. This is the art Danto believed to exist even with the death of art history: not “Art” as it has existed, but “Rt” as it has become. In this manner, we can say that art has truly ended, making the question “what is art?” become synonymous with “what was art?”

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# Loreta J. Velázquez

## Challenging Gender Roles in 19th-Century America

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The American Civil War was a time of crisis for an entire nation. The multigenerational debate over states' rights combined with differing views on slavery led to one of the most devastating wars America had ever seen. The war tore apart families as brothers chose opposite sides of the conflict and fathers left to fight for what they believed was right. Women played an important role for family life during the Civil War, as well as for the war effort. Mothers and daughters served in both the traditional and nontraditional gender roles that were expected during the 1800s. During the nineteenth century, women were expected to stay in the home and take care of their family, but some women were beginning to challenge that idea. When the war between the North and the South broke out many women stepped out of their place in the home to help in whatever way they could. Many women joined the war effort by becoming nurses or caring for troops, while others took on more dangerous roles such as becoming secret agents. In a few extreme cases women were known to disguise themselves as male soldiers and fight alongside their families. One woman by the name of Loreta Janeta Velázquez served as both a soldier and a spy for the Confederate army. Her service was well-documented and much has been written about her brave acts during the

Civil War. Loreta's decision to push the boundaries of traditional gender roles during the nineteenth century led her outside of the sphere of domesticity and in search of a more masculine lifestyle to substitute that of a housewife.

This paper aims to psychoanalyze Loreta's motives for joining the Confederate army and later the secret service using Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages (Elkind). The psychosocial stages of development are a set of guidelines that direct a person through all stages of their life, covering infancy to death. Each stage builds on one another, meaning that if a person does not pass through each stage correctly, then the following stages will not be completed properly as well. Erikson believed that this left the person with psychological issues, such as identity crises, throughout their life. While previous scholars have described the events leading up to Loreta's life decisions, they do not dig deeply into Loreta's motives for her lifestyle, and therefore disregard important information pertinent to her role as a liminal figure in the 1800s. Liminal figures are defined as beings that cannot be placed into a single category; they are often in between cultural standards (Seidman). By reviewing Loreta's memoir through the lens of Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, a pattern of emotional distress can be seen as the catalyst to her quest for adventure and ultimately led to her prolonged involvement in the Confederate army. This status as an outsider to traditional gender roles during the American Civil War allows Loreta to be viewed as a liminal figure.

Loreta Janeta Velázquez was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1842. Her father was of Spanish descent and came from a long line of army officers. Shortly after Loreta's birth her father inherited an estate in present day Texas. The Mexican-American war broke out a year after the Velázquez family arrived in their new home, and her father immediately joined the army. During the struggle of war, the family's estate was destroyed and the land was ceded to the United States, which fueled her father's intense hatred for Americans. He quickly moved the family back to Cuba but decided that his daughter should

continue to be taught in the English language. By the end of grade school, Loreta's family felt that she should finish her education in the United States and sent her to live with her aunt in New Orleans.

Throughout her entire childhood, Loreta had a desire to be male; she would play dress-up in her cousin's clothes late in the evening and read books about kings and soldiers. In her memoir, she stated that she often wished she could trade genders with her brother so she could join the army (Velázquez 42). She admired women who went against the gender norm of domesticity and became heroes. Early in her memoir she states, "despite the fact of my being a woman, I might be able to enjoy the excitements of the battlefield, and win for myself a warrior's fame" (Velázquez 39). Her family disapproved of her longing for adventure and encouraged her to tone down her eccentric thinking and fall into the normal role of domesticity. Loreta wrote, "This propensity of mine evidently annoyed him [her father] greatly, for he frequently reprimanded me with much severity" (Velázquez 42). This negative reception of her behavior would prove to be a common theme throughout Loreta's entire life. Loreta grew up around warfare and was often exposed to stories of her heroic male family members in battle. It was here, at an early age, that Loreta developed the desire to follow her father's footsteps and become a great soldier. It is by this admiration of heroes that she began to challenge male authority early in life, beginning her transition into a liminal figure.

Loreta's biggest childhood hero aside from her father was Joan of Arc, a major liminal figure within history. Joan of Arc was a French woman who lived during the Hundred Years' War; she led an army in the siege of Orléans, and was victorious. As a young girl, Loreta was fascinated by the stories that she would hear of Joan of Arc and of her father's time on the battlefield. Stories such as these allowed her to experience Erikson's stage of development concerning the ability to take initiative in one's life, also known as initiative versus guilt (Elkind 150-157). Loreta began to explore the world as she



knew it through books of heroic figures in history and within her own family. Loreta defined her own set of life rules at an early age, determined by the stories she was hearing, and therefore developed a skewed sense of traditional gender roles. Her desire to break out of the gendered world she lived in caused her to become a well-known liminal figure who has been used in several historical records regarding important women in history, as well as women's involvement in the Civil War.

In 1936, Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton wrote a book titled *The Women of the Confederacy*, in which they explored the different experiences of women in the South. Simkins and Patton were both well-versed in the history of the southern states during the Civil War. This collaboration was one of the first books to focus on the history of southern women, and aimed to prove that women played a vital role in the everyday lives of the Confederacy. Simkins and Patton explained that the job of the Confederate woman was to sustain the army and to keep alive the economy of the war-torn country. Based on personal writings from these women, they had much to tell of their relations with federal invaders, social pleasures, their anguish, and gave insight into the final few months of the Confederacy. Loreta Velázquez was mentioned briefly in this text regarding her acts of heroism, and this overview of her service provided an understanding of the reception of women soldiers based on experiences within the camps. It was explained that these women were not seen as brave, but instead viewed as eccentrics who had bad moral conduct (Simkins and Patton 81). Simkins and Patton claimed that if these women had lived in a different period, their acts of valor would have been highly regarded, but these were not the conditions available to them in the nineteenth century. Loreta's ability to take on both male and female characteristics as she navigated this difficult time in history allowed her to become a liminal figure and later a role model for other brave women.

Loreta's initiative to explore the world and the nature of

her childhood caused her to develop feelings of inferiority at an early age. Erikson's stage of industry versus inferiority relates to children's ability to build self-confidence early in life to develop their personal place in the world (Elkind 150-157). Failure to complete correctly this stage leads to role confusion later in life. Her father's decision to allow her to stay in school provided Loreta with a sense of independence and agency over her life early on. She developed skills that were not expected for women in the 1800s; instead of fine-tuning her future role as the caretaker for the family, she learned to read and write. Not only did her ability to read give her an advantage over other nineteenth-century women, it furthered her understanding of what it meant to be a hero and gave her new warriors to idolize. The instant pushback that Loreta received due to her eccentric thinking caused her to feel inferior to the rest of her family, as well as her society, and created a longing to prove that she too could become a great hero. Loreta called into question her role as a woman and therefore gravitated towards a male-centered personality. As Loreta came of age, her skewed views on women's roles caused her to question other aspects of her life, and created a pattern of role confusion that would last for most of her life.

As Loreta came of age, her parents planned to marry her to a Spaniard. Despite her personal feelings towards the marriage, Loreta obeyed her parents' wishes so as to not defy her family and her culture. It was not until her American friends expressed the ideals of a free America and the right to think for oneself that Loreta began to question her arranged marriage. While Loreta's Cuban culture required a Cuban husband selected by her parents, she now lived in America and was beginning to identify with American ideals. It was at this time in her life that she began experiencing role confusion. She expressed several times throughout her book that she did not want to defy her parents, but her new belief in freedom allowed her to recognize that she wanted to choose her husband. Loreta soon met an American army officer and fell in love, later eloping against her parents' wishes. Loreta's father,

prompted by this action, later disinherited her due to his hatred for the United States. Shortly after their marriage, Loreta's husband convinced her to convert to Protestantism. Although she was at first excited with her rebellion, she quickly became devastated over the loss of contact with her family and her change in faith. These profound changes in her life created feelings of confusion and sorrow within her. She reverted to her childhood dreams of becoming a brave soldier and often longed for a large conflict to break out and distract her from the drastic changes in her life. In 1857, the government organized an expedition against the Mormon faith and Loreta's husband was called to attend. She longed to join him in the crusade but, having recently become a mother, was forced to stay behind and fulfill her domestic duties. By 1860, Loreta had lost all three of her children to fever. In her memoir, she explained that it was her extreme grief over the loss of her children that rekindled her motivation for "military glory and fame on the battlefield" (Velázquez 50). Loreta had arguably fallen into what Erikson would call the stage of stagnation (Elkind 150-157). This meant that her life was no longer developing, as she had been disowned by her family, abandoned her faith, lost all her children, and was living without her husband. This would have left Loreta feeling lost and therefore led her to renew her childhood dream of becoming a famous heroine.

During times of war, because their husbands were on the battlefield, many women would have likely been experiencing similar situations while still performing difficult duties. Authors such as Walter Sullivan viewed the impact of the Civil War on women in a vastly different way from that of previous historians. Sullivan was a novelist first and a historian second, and thus believed that women throughout history had a unique view on important historical events due to their desire to keep diaries. Sullivan saw these diaries as producing more accurate accounts of events than other media, as the diary entries were generally written shortly after the events took place, rather than years later, after men reflected on the

events they had been involved in. Sullivan composed a book in 1995 titled *The War the Women Lived: Female Voices from the Confederate South*, in which he researched women's journal entries to determine how the war affected the everyday lives of women in the south. Sullivan explained that women were expected to continue their work in the home while still aiding the needs of the community when the men were away (Sullivan 131). These expectations were often overwhelming, and women like Loreta rebelled against this expectation by leaving the sphere of domesticity in order to be with the army camps and take care of the soldiers.

When tensions between the North and South began to worsen, Loreta longed for a war to break out. Deciding that her dream of becoming a great heroine like Joan of Arc was too much to suppress, she attempted to join the army. Loreta desired her husband's approval, but he was unaccepting of her behavior. She continued with her plan despite her husband's insistence that she was to remain in the home where she belonged. Her challenge of male authority at this time served as a threat to the traditional gender roles of society. By searching for her husband's approval, but continuing with her plans despite not receiving it, she reinforced her role as a liminal figure; Loreta exhibited qualities both female and male by wanting the approval of a man, yet she was taking action in her life just as a man might do. In response to her lack of respect and obedience, her husband treated Loreta differently. When her husband joined the Confederate army after Texas seceded from the Union in 1861, she described that, on the day of his departure for war, he barely showed her any affection. In the 1800s, women were expected to remain in the home and obey their husband, and Loreta's challenge to this social norm likely caused him to feel inadequate as a husband. He was unable to control his wife, and therefore failed at the social standards for men at that time. Once her husband left for battle, Loreta began working on her male disguise and developed a new persona named Lieutenant Harry T. Bufford. Still searching for validation, she entrusted her

plan with yet another male in her life: a longtime friend of her husband who had become a guardian figure to Loreta while her husband was away. In her memoir, she explained that as she told him of her plan, he turned pale and wore an astonished expression on his face. Just as her husband had done, he attempted to persuade her not to follow through with her “crazy plan,” even going so far as to forbid her from doing so (Velázquez 63). Once again, Loreta challenged the male authority and refused to obey like a traditional woman would have.

Throughout her first year as a soldier, Loreta’s focus was to prove to her husband that she could in fact be a member of the Confederate army and, more importantly, gain his approval of her service. Disguised as Lieutenant Bufford, she worked hard to raise a battalion and, once assembled, she marched it to her husband’s camp, hoping he would finally take her seriously as a soldier. It was Loreta’s intention that once she gained his support, she would no longer need to remain in disguise. Unfortunately, once she was reunited with her husband and disclosed her identity to him, she did not receive the validation she was looking for. Instead she wrote that he was shocked and began to grieve the loss of his wife (Velázquez 65). Evidently, he would have rather that Loreta had died than to have defied him any longer. Shortly after their reunion, her husband was killed in a training accident. In her memoir, she stated, “I was now alone in the world, and more than ever disposed to take an active part in the war” (Velázquez 87). With the loss of her husband and her chance of gaining his approval gone, she had nothing left but her dreams of becoming a famous heroine. Loreta had reached the age where societal standards imposed on her a successful marriage and children, but she had lost those characteristics as well as her connection with her extended family. Having lost her direction in life, Loreta reverted to the psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion. Looking for meaning and direction in her life, she reconnected with her desire to become a renowned soldier, and therefore made the decision

to remain undercover in the Confederate army.

On the night before Loreta's first battle, she reflected on her childhood dream to be a part of an adventure. She stated that, "I was about to enter upon the realization of all my dreams, to see some real warfare, to engage in real battles, to do some real fighting, and, as I fondly hoped, to have some opportunity to distinguish myself in a signal matter" (Velázquez 95). Her repetition of the word "real" in this passage shows her transition from fantasy to reality, and demonstrates that she was about to fulfill her ambition of becoming a famous soldier. Because her romantic notion of warfare was developed from the fantastic stories she had heard growing up, she was more excited than nervous about the outcome of war. This reflection on her youth shows a relapse in the stages of psychosocial development. Although Loreta was once again experiencing role confusion, just as she had in her early adolescence, by regressing to a more youthful stage, she was able to regain control and find direction in her life once again.

Within Loreta's memoir there are references to her need for heroism. This desire drove her actions throughout her entire life. She composed her book with that desire in mind, and wrote it to give herself the recognition she so desperately wanted. Halfway through writing her memoir, she came to the realization that she did not need to be the second Joan of Arc, and that instead she should idolize herself. Loreta states that,

To be a second Joan of Arc was a mere girlish fancy, which my very first experience as a soldier dissipated forever; and it did not take me long to discover that I needed no model, but that, to win success in the career I had chosen, I must be simply myself, and not a copy. (Velázquez 128)

In this moment, by realizing that the stories she read as a child were merely fantasies and that she should instead focus

on her current reality, Loreta was able to move past the childhood stage of role confusion, moving forward in the process of finding her identity. It is also significant that she wrote her own memoir, as she wanted to be sure that her story was told as she experienced it, rather than hoping someone would find inspiration in her life and wish to write about her. Loreta wrote her own book ensuring that people would hear about her accomplishments from her personal experience and think of her as a more modern liminal figure among the likes of Joan of Arc.

One objective behind Loreta writing of her own accomplishments was to prove to men that women were not weaker than or inferior to them. She discussed how this drive grew as the other soldiers joked about her small size, stating that “I was especially bent upon showing some of them, who were disposed to smile at me on account of my *petite* figure and jaunty air, that I was as good a man as any one of them, and was able to face the enemy as valiantly” (Velázquez 100). The mockery she received in the camps brought back memories of her family’s disapproval of her eccentric nature as a child, causing feelings of inferiority to reappear. These feelings spurred her longing to prove that a small stature and a friendly personality could also be tough and brave. After her first official battle in the Confederate army, Loreta wrote, “There may have been men who did harder fighting at Bull Run than myself, but no one went through the fight with a stouter heart, or with a greater determination to behave valiantly, and, if possible, to give the enemy a sound thrashing” (Velázquez 97). Her inclusion of this statement implies that she wanted to prove to any potential male readers that women, although smaller, could fight with more passion than any man. Loreta remained in the army and fought in several battles. Each encounter reminded her that the stories she had read as a child were glamorized and did not accurately represent the real experience of war. She was finally able to experience battle and fulfill that lifelong dream which allowed her to move beyond her role confusion and let go of her juvenile

fantasies. After this achievement, her desire to fight began to weaken and she would soon give up her male persona to resume her female identity.

Throughout her first year in the service, Loreta corresponded with a fellow officer and friend of her late husband. They fell in love through these letters, but he was unaware that he had been fighting alongside her for two years. When they were both wounded in battle, they spent several weeks side-by-side in hospital beds. He would tell Lieutenant Buford all about the amazing woman he had fallen in love with, unaware that she was lying right next to him. Once Loreta finally mustered up the courage to disclose her true identity she asked him,

Can you love her a little for that [her service in the war] as well as for herself? Or will you despise her because she was not willing to stay at home like the other women, but undertook to appear on the battlefield in the guise of a man for the purpose of doing a man's duty?" in which he replied, "I love you ten times more than ever for this, Loreta! (Velázquez 332)

This reaction, which differed tremendously from her first husband's, excited Loreta, believing for the first time that she, as a woman, had gained respect for her service from a man. These feelings of recognition helped to assuage her feelings of inferiority and instead made her feel competent. Loreta's use of third person in this passage of her book demonstrated a disconnect from herself; she was unsure of her identity and was once again expressing role confusion. She found an acceptable identity for a short time with her new husband and settled back into the traditional gender role expected in the 1800s. Unfortunately, his acceptance of her service in the war would not last, for as soon as the two were married he insisted that she stay at home. He claimed that Loreta had done enough for her country, and that he would fight in her place



for the both of them. He also warned her not to speak of her service, claiming that it would be dangerous for her well-being and reputation. Loreta's acts of bravery were only acceptable to him when his name was not attached to them, implying that it was his own reputation he was worried about. Therefore, he sent her back into domesticity, which was where society believed she belonged. For a short amount of time, Loreta had again found her direction in life; she returned to the sphere of domesticity, where she cared for her home and her husband. But it would not be long before she once again found herself confused and restless about her place in society.

Loreta's brief participation in the traditional women's role ended shortly after her husband returned to the battlefield only to lose his life to illness. Her husband had convinced her to give up her career in the army forcing her back into the sphere of domesticity and he died shortly after, leaving her isolated in an unfamiliar world. Loreta felt her life grow stagnant. She explained that the loss of both things she loved left her in need of a distraction or a new role. Unfortunately, as her health had been permanently impaired in the previous years of battle, she decided that rejoining the army in disguise was dangerous. Her previous injuries and her disappearance from the service for several months made it unsafe for her to return to battle as Lieutenant Bufford. The loss of her second husband represented a second failure in social standards, and she had very little experience in the traditional roles for women. Looking for direction, she was soon motivated to reenlist as a female spy for the Confederacy. She had previously done some undercover work during her time as Lieutenant Bufford and therefore thought she had met the qualifications for the job. She was specifically selected for her first task due to her bravery in battle by a man who had learned of her time undercover as Lieutenant Bufford. This gave Loreta the recognition from her peers that she had longed for. With purpose once again restored to her life, she set off on her first mission as a Confederate spy.

Loreta spent the remainder of her time in the Confederate

army as a secret agent. She resumed her female attire and took back her real name. Her acceptance of her real identity helped her to finally let go of her childish nature and move forward in her personal development. She was slowly able to regain contact with her parents and siblings which restored purpose and intimacy in her life, allowing her to no longer feel isolated. By the end of the war she had married for the third time and had given birth to a healthy son. Her ability to settle down and take on the role as a wife and mother demonstrated that she had reached the stage of generativity instead of once again falling into stagnation (Elkind, 150-157). But while she had finally taken on the role that society deemed appropriate for women, Loreta continued to challenge societal norms. She continued to act as a liminal figure throughout the remainder of her life, writing her memoir to ensure that her story would forever be available to those longing to escape the expected gender roles. Reflecting on her past, helped Loreta to feel comfortable living out the remainder of her life, knowing that she would become a heroine to someone, just as Joan of Arc and her father had been to her. Following the completion of her book, she followed her husband to a mining town in California and little is known about the rest of her life. Once she found purpose in her family, she no longer felt the need for adventure and fame. She was able to feel as though she had accomplished her childhood aspirations and was able to settle down into a more acceptable female gender role during the nineteenth century.

## **Conclusion**

The American Civil War forced women to challenge traditional gender roles as they stepped out of the house and onto the battlefield to help the war effort. Some women were motivated by patriotism while others, like Loreta Velázquez, were searching for fame and glory, and pushing gender roles far beyond their limits. By analyzing Loreta's memoir with Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, it can be seen

that her motives for joining the army and remaining in the service for the duration of the war were driven by disruption in her daily life. Whether it be the death of a family member, the loss of contact with her Cuban family, or a change in faith, each time her life changed she reconnected with her childhood dream to become a great warrior. It was only after Loreta had achieved that goal that she was she able to have a successful marriage and child, thereby fulfilling the societal norm for women in the 1800s. Though she returned to the home, she not only remained a liminal figure in the nineteenth century, but became an important role model for women in the years to follow.

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# I Walk the Line

## Postwar Masculinity in *Bird of Paradise* (1951)

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World War II altered human experience immeasurably. Those returning from the war were faced with a new United States. Specifically, as gender relations evolved, masculinity had a new definition. Masculinity broke new grounds through films, sitcoms, and literature. Serving as a cultural lens, postwar masculinity was heavily portrayed through film and media. Film, in this case films and media spanning 1947-1956, defined the social distinctions that people had imposed upon men of the age. Studying films and media of postwar America creates a bridge to define the era's gender relations. This can be applied to any decade, confirming the notion that film is a historical tool. The film *Bird of Paradise* (1951) serves as a clear example of some of the postwar attitudes towards masculinity in the United States. In this study, the focus centers around masculinity and its different aspects as demonstrated through the film *Bird of Paradise* and other media spanning from 1947-1956. This study demonstrates the importance of media, in this case film, as a category of evidence in historical scholarship. As a critical factor for change, World War II can be seen as one of the most important causes for changing attitudes regarding masculinity. This study also examines the many defining characteristics of postwar masculinity, focusing on the domestic, eco-

conomic, sexual, and physical facets of postwar men. Contributing to postwar masculine scholarship, this study analyzes the definitions of masculinity in the immediate years after World War II.

### ***Bird of Paradise* (1951)**

*Bird of Paradise* starred Debra Paget, Louis Jordan, and Jeff Chandler. The film follows the life of a Frenchman named Andre Lawrence (Louis Jourdan) who studied and lived in America, and his flight from urban society to a Polynesian Eden. Following his university friend Tenga (Jeff Chandler), Andre reaches the Polynesian island home of the Kanaka people. At first, the Kanaka people welcomed Andre hesitantly, but because Tenga was prominent with the islanders, they came to accept him quickly. One of the islanders, Kalua (Debra Paget), became enamored with Andre. Importantly, Kalua was the sister of Tenga and daughter of the Chief (Prince Leilani). After a secret embrace between Andre and Kalua, Tenga sends Andre to another island. There, Andre meets the Beachcomber (Everett Sloane). The Beachcomber serves as a warning of what may happen to Andre if he continues his pursuit of Kalua. Andre returns only to face the antagonist of the story, the Kahuna (Maurice Schwartz), a type of religious leader for the islanders. The Kahuna was completely against Andre remaining on the island, much less taking Kalua as his wife. The story progresses to the point where Andre and Kalua are married. Andre, being French, has a difficult time accepting the marriage customs of the Kanaka people. After they marry, the volcano on the island begins to erupt. The Kahuna signals that Kalua is the only person who can stop the furor of the volcano. Much to the dismay of Andre, she perishes. Kalua sacrifices herself, her love, and her future for the lives of the islanders. Following her death, Andre vows to never return to the island, leaving it as a morose widower.

The film serves as a lens for masculine culture of the United States. Masculinity, as stated previously, evolved after

the war. Men were returning from the war damaged and paranoid, many suffering from battle fatigue. They saw horrors in the war; many lost family and friends. *Twelve O'clock High* (1949), starring Gregory Peck, portrays the horrors of war men lived through. Yet, regardless of the horrors of World War II, men were still expected to be productive members of postwar society. Essentially, men were supposed to be dominating patriarchs, buying houses, and establishing families. Also, capitalism grasped American economics, establishing a consumer culture in the American male. Along with this consumer culture, male clothing became an important marker for masculinity. On a different note, sexuality was forever changed. New sexual norms were accepted for men. Different venues of male sexuality were presented as a response to the evolving times. Hand in hand with the era, society agreed that a proper man was one with a dominating physical presence. These postwar masculine virtues are present in *Bird of Paradise*.

### **Capitalism and Domestic Masculinity**

World War II had a profound impact on masculinity in the home. Houses were being built across the country at a very fast rate (Halberstam 132). With the increased production of houses, men were now tasked with helping produce offspring. Production of houses skyrocketed in the postwar years because of the GI Bill, which facilitated loans and capital to produce and purchase houses. First, the male had to produce the house, then acquire his wife. This is seen in *Bird of Paradise*. Kalua explained to Andre that it was the custom to buy the wife and that she would be very expensive. For example, in one scene, the Beachcomber states: "Don't be particular in picking a woman, a wench is a wench. No woman is good until she is a grandmother." This speaks volumes about the American institution of marriage. Masculinity, in one aspect, was defined as having a successful marriage; if the marriage lasted until the later years of life, then the husband had an

adequate marriage. Societal pressure forced men to marry and establish families. It was the norm to seek marriage and establish a household. The idea of establishing housing and marriage, with the eventual addition of children, came to be a cornerstone of postwar men.

Clearly, a married man was a respectable man. Men, as the providers and heads of the household were leading the charge in American consumerism. Andre states in *Bird of Paradise*: "I am the son of a very rich man, I can buy anything." This ideal was well known by postwar men. Men used money as a sign of power. Affluence was a sign of proper masculine dominance. Throughout the film, Tenga repeatedly states how much things cost, demonstrating that the value of items is important. A newfound sense of wealth after the war exploded onto the American market. It was boom or bust: men were buying houses, cars, appliances, jewelry, and many other items previous generations were not able to because of economic shortages. American consumerism took hold of every household. An American man was the epitome of masculinity if he owned his own home, was affluent, and decorated his home in a virile style. Postwar capitalism gave way to the bachelor pad (Ogersby 103). This bachelor pad was a gathering place for men to flaunt their masculinity to other men, or, more importantly, other women. As bachelors, the consumer culture of America caused them to spend money lavishly. *Bird of Paradise* again portrays this extravagance. When buying Kalua from the Chief, Tenga states that Andre is giving the most expensive gifts to acquire Kalua. The idea of giving the most expensive gifts to acquire a woman was widespread in postwar masculinity. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), Gus Esmond Jr. (Tommy Noonan) constantly gives Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe) expensive jewelry to secure their marriage. The idea of lavishly spending for a woman was deemed normal, even encouraged by American capitalist society. Women were expected to be pleased by the spending of their men. In a scene of *Bird of Paradise*, women are bathing together while Kalua exclaims: "[These are] the benefits of a rich husband,

fine soap!”

Allocating funds for consumption and pleasure was one characteristic of postwar masculinity. Along with the consumer culture of postwar men, clothing became a signature marker for a virile male. Men had to dress a certain way if they were to be acceptable men. Suit, tie, and hat were the signature items of a masculine wardrobe. Suits and ties were the norm of society. Because of this prevalent social principle, Andre struggled with the native garments of the Kanaka people. He simply could not put them on. In another scene, upon arrival on the island, Tenga tells Andre that he will not need “these clothes” anymore. Importantly, Andre and Tenga were dressed in Western attire. Postwar men were inundated with this Western attire principle. The norm of a suit and tie was hinted at through various channels. In *Casino Royale*, published by Ian Fleming in 1953, James Bond and his suave masculinity flooded American media for generations to come. James Bond, well known for glamorous suits, set the standard for what a man should wear and what he should look like (Bradshaw 41). American consumption affected masculine attire, defining a proper man as one dressed in a suit and tie.

### **Sexuality, Gender, and Culture**

Hierarchies were superimposed upon marriage. In the scene where Kalua offers a second wife to Andre, the situation is controlled and decided by Andre alone. Men were above women in postwar marriage hierarchies. For example, in *The Honeymooners* (1955-1956), Ralph Kramden (Jackie Gleason) tells Art Carney (Ed Norton): “I am king of my castle, Alice is but a mere peasant, a servant to do my bidding.” Postwar masculinity created a culture of gender imperialism, subjugating women to men. A form of relegation in the household was expressed by the areas of the house that belonged to the separate genders. For example, as seen in *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957), women were to be in the kitchen washing dishes or pre-



paring food while men were in the living room enjoying television and smoking cigars. An advertisement found in *Life* magazine portrays this principle adequately. Two men are enjoying beers in what today may be called a “man cave.” It is full of sports memorabilia and hunting trophies (*Life*, August 28, 1950). This advertisement displays the domestic segregation of gender. Not portraying women demonstrates that marketing techniques of the postwar era understood that men should have the privilege of enjoying a communal room in the house, while excluding women and placing them in the kitchen like *I Love Lucy*. The exclusion of women from this advertisement voices the societal agreement that men were superior, further reinforcing gender hierarchies. Men were now subjected to new standards of living within their homes, carrying values of courage and virility. Masculine sexuality was a complicated subject in postwar America. Sexuality was gradually becoming freer. In *Bird of Paradise*, Andre questions Tenga:

Andre: When can I have Kalua to my own, alone at home?

Tenga: You're already ready for marriage?

Andre: Maybe it's my French blood.

This hasty desire to fulfill his sexual urges voices the sexual nature of men in the postwar era. Hyper-sexuality was expressed through the media. Stereotyping the sexual nature of the French male, Kalua voices her pleasure with Andre while embracing: “My people do not kiss like this.” This hyper-sexualization voices the sexual culture of postwar society. Men were now having more sexual encounters, but were also prudent in their expression of these encounters. Sexuality was still a private matter, even though sexual freedom was expanding. Also, demonstrating this hyper-sexuality is the film *Captain from Castile* (1947). In the film, Hernán Cortés (Cesar Romero) perpetually grabs the faces of female characters, even smacking the bottom of Catana Perez (Jean Peters).

Postwar sexuality ventured into unknown territories. Men were constantly having various sexual encounters with women, something previous generations of men deemed taboo. Sexuality was slowly becoming free and open. This is portrayed in *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952). Nell Forbes (Marilyn Monroe) invites Jed Towers (Richard Widmark) to her suite in a hotel for a random sexual encounter. Through new avenues of expression, male sexuality was in a process of becoming more open. Male sexuality soared to new liberal heights in the postwar era. This was aided with the publication of the magazine *Playboy*. On the cover of the first issue of *Playboy* (1953), it is clearly stated what the magazines purpose is: "Entertainment for Men." Hugh Hefner revolutionized male sexuality for the ages. The hyper-sexuality of men at the time was sent to new areas with the inception of *Playboy*, which not only included centerfolds, but it contained articles and literature guiding men on how to *be* playboys. In the same first issue, sexual stories from Boccaccio's *Decameron* are printed (*Playboy* 1953). While these stories portray the sexual advances of Renaissance men towards women, they clearly served as guidance and examples for what postwar men should be. It was through *Playboy* and other media that hyper-sexuality was evident in American society. The heterosexual male was able to flourish whether he was married or indeed a bachelor. Societal norms dictated that a proper man was married, but a heterosexual bachelor was permissible if he was gazing upon women (Mitchell 11). Postwar men accepted their new hypersexual nature.

Pertaining to the complicated nature of postwar sexuality, there were also some aspects of male sexuality that were more reserved. While *Playboy* and other media demonstrated new-found freedom of sexuality, there are examples of the opposite occurring. Men were bound to marriage and procreation. The purpose of relationships was to produce offspring and ensure that they became functioning members of society. Tenga stated in *Bird of Paradise*: "It is important that marriage is right and good, we do not have divorce here." Also, upon the

marriage of Andre and Kalua, Tenga reiterates the main goal of marriage: “children will be produced immediately.” While sexuality was reaching new levels of freedom, men were still held to modesty and privacy with their sexual relationships. For example, Andre and Kalua’s first encounter ended with a passionate embrace, but notably no kiss. This indicates that even though Andre was portrayed to be a hyper-sexual Frenchman, he had to align with the norm of sex belonging to the privacy of marriage. Open sexuality was frowned upon even though new venues were emerging. Sexuality, reaching new levels of open expression, was unstable. This conveys a great deal about what men were experiencing in their courtships after the war. Sexuality and its pursuits were for the ultimate goal of producing a family, but at the same time a man was supposed to demonstrate his virility to the world.

Sexuality has always proved to be a contested issue. Conservative sexual practices were the standard of the postwar era, but the virility of man had to be expressed. Because of this, new venues were slowly being created for male sexuality to be expressed. *Playboy* and films helped express and confirm widespread values of postwar sexual masculinity. This opposing nature of sexuality was striking. Previous traditional beliefs regarding courtship and marriage were still being practiced in postwar America, but sexuality headed towards a more expressive direction. This allowed men to have multiple partners throughout their lives. One reason for this was that men were protesting the institution of marriage. Feeling like they had to conform to society, men indulged in sexual practices as a form of rebellion. Also, the fact that previous generations were still practicing traditional sexual culture answers the question as to why there were confounding sexual beliefs in postwar America. Men were defining the new sexual culture of postwar society. New practices were slowly surpassing conservative sexuality, allowing postwar men to experience more freedom in their sexual practices. Postwar sexuality, albeit contradictory, demonstrates that men were establishing new sexual culture, slowly discovering and defining

what sexuality would become, while abandoning previous definitions of traditional sexuality. Men were just establishing new sexual practices, while neither fully free nor any longer fully traditional. The duality of sexual masculinity demonstrates that the concept of sexuality was a complicated issue, free on one hand, and conservative on the other.

### **Physicality of Postwar Men**

A final aspect of masculinity contained in this study is the tough, dominating physical presence of men in the postwar era. A man was expected to be virile, valiant, and all around “macho.” Pastimes had to be masculine pastimes, such as: hunting, card playing, football, surf, boxing, etc. *Bird of Paradise* depicts one of these pastimes: a scene in the film depicts many men, including Andre and Tenga, surfing. Men, again, were expected to participate in virile activities. For example, they were expected to be heroic in the face of danger and physical combat. In *Broken Arrow* (1950), an Apache warrior confronts Tom Jeffords (James Stewart) for his decision not to fight, eventually calling him a “woman” because of it. Postwar men were fighting men, apparently unfazed by danger or harm. This fighting spirit was repeated throughout different sociocultural channels. In Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, men are pitted against each other in a gladiatorial “battle royal.” There, they would combat each other in a wild frenzy until one man emerged victorious (Ellison 17). Given this this combative spirit, men were hardly deemed masculine if they suffered emotional distress from battle injuries (DeBona 63). This desensitization to danger and injuries came naturally to the returning veterans of World War II. The quintessential American male depicted this rugged masculinity throughout his career: John Wayne in the “cavalry trilogy—the films *Fort Apache* (1948), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950)—best represents the military culture of American men. In *Rio Grande* (1950), for example, he plays the character of Lt. Col. Kirby Yorke, who is shot in the chest with

an arrow during a battle. In a very masculine manner, he simply gets it pulled out, stands up, and resumes giving military orders. The fighting that American men endured marked their lives significantly upon their return to civilian life. They were unmoved by the threat of violence and danger; a man was supposed to be unafraid, battling anything that faces him. In another John Wayne classic, *Hondo* (1953), Hondo Lane (John Wayne) battles an Apache in a knife fight. Examples like these demonstrate men of the postwar era to be “macho.” They participated in virile pastimes and were unwavering in the face of a fight. Masculinity, at the time, exemplified the importance of keeping up appearances as a “strong man.”

## Conclusion

The focus in this study has been masculinity and its different aspects as demonstrated through the film *Bird of Paradise* and other media spanning from 1947-1956. The definition of masculinity in postwar America was wide ranging. While many factors played a part in the defining aspects of masculinity, none, however, had a greater impact than the experience of World War II. *Bird of Paradise* and its relative media companions served as vehicles with which to understand the complexity of postwar masculinity. *Bird of Paradise* confirms the notion that film can serve as a bridge for learning history and culture of an era.

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# Germanic and Aztec Holistic Medical Practices

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The way in which humans have taken care of their medical needs has evolved exponentially. Some of the most ancient medical practices were holistic in nature; that is, they addressed the mind, body, spirit, and emotional needs in order to achieve health. The purpose of this essay is to present similarities and differences of plant-based holistic medical practices of Germanic peoples of the High Middle Ages (c. 1000 - 1300) and Aztecs during the Age of Exploration in order to analyze the nature of the world these two cultures lived in, to discover the extent they were influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, and to trace the rise and fall of holistic traditions in accordance to the evolution of medical philosophies and practices. Though both groups were heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, there are many differences between healers such as Hildegard of Bingen and, from the New World, Juan Badiano and Martin de la Cruz. Furthermore, these holistic medicinal traditions shine a light onto the nature of how pre-Modern societies perceived the world they lived in.

Hildegard of Bingen was a medicinal healer born in 1098 in Bockelheim, in the diocese of Mainz, Germany. Hildegard was the daughter of a knight in the service of Meginhar. At the age of six, she began to receive visions from the Holy Spirit that historians speculate to be hallucinations induced by migraines or epilepsy. These visions lead her to become an



anchorite of St. Disibolde at Disbodenberg with Jutta of Spanheim, the sister of Count Meginhard. Anchorites lived in seclusion, usually in an enclosed room attached to the main church or in a small hut, for religious reasons such as constant prayer for the community. This position within the Roman Catholic Church was highly honorable and gave Hildegard a rare opportunity uncommon for most women during this time: access to Classical texts and the opportunity to learn to read and write Latin. In 1136, she became abbess and continued to write extensively of the twenty-six visions she received over her the following years. She then compiled her visions into an illustrated manuscript called *Scivias* between 1141-1142. This manuscript catapulted her into religious fame in 1147 after Pope Eugenius approved her work. Aside from recording her spiritual experiences, she was also an avid musician and composer; she also had a great interest in botany, and was political moralist who received many letters from kings, queens, emperors, bishops, abbesses, and common folk alike seeking her advice or blessings. She died in 1179 and is considered a saint.

The healers Martin de la Cruz and Juan Badiano, on the other hand, do not have a recorded biography as extensive as Hildegard's. We do know that Martin de la Cruz was born in Xochimilco (modern-day Mexico City) at the end of the fifteenth century after Spanish colonization during the Age of Exploration. The Age of Exploration can be described as the pursuit of European powers to explore the world in order to satisfy their curiosity, pursue trade, spread religion, and further extend their political power. During this time, Europeans came into consistent contact with indigenous peoples of the Americas. Martin de la Cruz first trained for priestly and warrior duties at a *calmecac*, a rigorous school for Aztec nobility and some commoners, according to Sahagun. Students as young as five to seven years old learned to recite songs, perform rituals, read the calendar (*tōnalpōhualli*), and write in Nahuatl at these *calmecacs* (Sahagun Book III, folio 232v). Cruz eventually became a teacher at a Franciscan established

school called the Real Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. It is not clear what he taught but he was petitioned by the son of the Viceroy of New Spain to write a codex of herbal remedies for King Carlos V. The first draft of the *Libellus De Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis* (also known as the Badiano Codex) was written in Nahuatl, the primary indigenous language spoken in this region. His colleague, Juan Badiano, was born in 1484 in Xochimilco and was also a teacher at the Real Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. Badiano had the task of translating the codex from Nahuatl into Latin in 1552. Although Hildegard and Martin de la Cruz were born into noble families, Hildegard clearly held more authority and influence within her community.

Hildegard's power and sphere of influence within the Roman Catholic Church was unquestionable. In 1153 she wrote a letter to Pope Anastasius IV stating:

You, O Man, who are too tired . . . to rein in the pomposity of arrogance among those placed in your bosom . . . why do you put up with depraved people who are blinded by foolishness and who delight in harmful things, like a hen that cackles in the night and terrifies herself? Such people are completely useless. (Cahill 91)

This direct criticism sent to the Pope indicates the power she held as an individual. The opening line of the letter stating, "You, O Man" is a very informal way to address an authority figure. The use of such frank language with the Pope further illustrates her stature within the Roman Catholic Church, which enabled her to give such criticism of political agendas without being punished.

On the other hand, it is clear from the preface to the *Libellus* that Martin de la Cruz held less influence, despite his status as a nobleman within Aztec society. For example, he writes: "Keep in mind, Sir [King Carlos V], that us poor and miserable Indians, are inferior to all mortals and due to our

smallness and natural insignificance, deserve indulgence” (Cruz 13). The use of formalities such as the title “Sir” and the formal language incorporated in the preface illustrates a clear power difference between the Spanish monarch and indigenous nobleman. Furthermore, his self-proclaimed statement of being a “poor and miserable Indian” shines light of the socio-political conditions during this era: European-males clearly maintained authority while indigenous peoples carried the heavy burden of European expansion and, to a point, cultural destruction. This is in vivid contrast to Hildegard’s frank addresses to the Pope and illustrates a strong patriarchal hegemony between Catholic Spaniards and the newly converted indigenous population. Also, the lack of extensive biographical information concerning Martin de la Cruz and Juan Badiano demonstrate the reluctance of the Spanish to remember them and their work, further revealing their sub-class roles in society.

Yet, it is interesting to note that some Peninsulares maintained a deep curiosity regarding Aztec medicinal practices and herbal remedies. This branch of knowledge was considered worthy enough to be explored by the Colegio de Santa Cruz and consequently presented to the Spanish monarchy (though it never reached its final destination and was stored until the twentieth century). While many of the Aztec cultural and religious texts were destroyed during the conquest due to their polytheistic nature, these herbal remedies were investigated and recorded anew. Hernan Cortez proclaimed in a letter to Carlos I, “do not send doctors to New Spain, given that those here cure very quickly and well, aided in the experience and very particular knowledge of botany” (Estrada et al). Though the Catholic Church deemed some of the Aztec medicinal practices and philosophies heretical in nature, it is possible that the effectiveness of their herbal remedies forged a path for the re-recordings of past knowledge. Furthermore, the Badiano Codex solely describes herbal remedies and does not include extensive information regarding Aztec spiritual philosophies connected to healing. This demonstrates the

Aztec perseverance to keep ancient traditions alive while conforming to new religious authorities. The socio-political standing of Hildegard and Cruz and Badiano contrast just as much as do their training and respective medical texts.

Hildegard' did not receive a formal medical education and claimed the true source of all her knowledge came from visions from the Holy Spirit. This can be seen through a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux in which she proclaimed she was "taught from within, by means of my soul" (Strehlow, 2002, xxvi). Some commentators speculate she denounced her accumulated knowledge in order to avoid the risk of heretical accusations. The wide variety of plant and animal species in *Physica* indicates personal observation of these natural substances. Yet, the incorporation of mythological creatures, such as unicorns, proves *Physica* to be mixture of direct observation and folk legends. Though she claimed to be self-taught, it is believed that she received some training as an infirmarian in Disibodenberg (Sweet). Before the first European university was established in Bologna in 1088, many monasteries were the sites of early hospitals and infirmaries. Furthermore, the incorporation of the Hippocratic humor system as a basis of her healing methods indicates research of Classical medical texts. Overall, it remains unclear where she received her medical training and knowledge.

Hildegard's medical text, *Subtilitatum Diversarum Nacturarum Creaturarum* (*Of the Simplicities of Various Natural Creatures*), was written between 1151-1158. Known as *Physica*, it is composed of nine books that describe the scientific and medicinal properties of various plants, stones, fish, reptiles, and animals (Von Bingen 5). *Physica* contains many folk Germanic plants and herbs, most of which even modern-day audiences can easily identify, such as mint, rosemary, and thyme. Most of the plants and herbs listed lack detailed physical descriptions apart from their physical qualities based on the four-element system. For example, in *Physica*, Hildegard describes nettles: "Nettle (*urtica*) is very hot in its own way. It is not at all good eat raw, because of its harshness. But,

when it newly sprouts from the ground, it is good when cooked, as good for a human. It purges his stomach and takes mucus away from it” (Hildegard von Bingen 53). Nettles are considered “hot” and will combat diseases that are “cold” in nature. Apart from this basic description, Hildegard does not provide evidence as to what these plants and herbs look like, but does include herbal remedies that one may (or may not) prepare with them. The lack of images for identification purposes indicates her intended audience was those who could read Latin, had a basic knowledge of Germanic folk plants and foods, and could easily identify them. Clergymen who worked in monasteries with an herbal garden or noblemen who read Latin appear to be her intended audience. Though Pope Eugenius approved *Scivias*, her illustrated manuscript of visions, and urged her to write more, he didn’t directly petition a work on medicinal practices. A general interest in the subject matter can be also seen through her previous biographical works about Saint Disbold who cultivated herbal substances in the area.

The second of Hildegard’s primary medical texts, *Liber Compositae Medicinae or Causae et Curae (Causes and Cures)*, explores the human body, its connections to the natural world and the cosmos, as well as the causes and cures of various diseases over a span of 300 chapters (Strehlow and Hertzka). Hildegard’s informal medical training along with her use of Classical medical texts and folk Germanic influences differs greatly from Martin de la Cruz.

Regarding their medical training, Martin de la Cruz and Juan Badiano both taught at the Colegio de Santa Cruz in *Tlatelolco* though it is unclear where they primarily trained. The Colegio de Santa Cruz was one of the first European schools of higher learning in the Americas inaugurated by the Franciscan Order in 1536 with the intention of ordaining indigenous boys into Catholic priesthood. Students learned to read and write in Nahuatl, Spanish, and Latin, received instruction in music, rhetoric, logic, and philosophy in Latin,

and learned about indigenous medicine (Ricard 220). The impact this institution had in relation to Aztec culture, natural sciences, and herbal medicines is unprecedented; aside from the Badiano Codex, other students from the university contributed to the compilation of the *General History of the Things of New Spain*, also known as the *Florentine Codex*, by Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún (Ricard 240). Unfortunately, no student was ever ordained, as indigenous priests, along with mestizos and blacks, were banned from ordination in 1555, and the school closed within two decades due to lack of funds (Ricard 230). Though it is unclear what they taught, Martin de la Cruz may have had extensive knowledge of Aztec medicinal plants since he was petitioned to write a codex at an institution that specialized in the subject matter.

The *Libellus De Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis* (The Badiano Codex) itself was petitioned to be written by the son of the Viceroy of New Spain, Don Francisco de Mendoza, in the hope of sending it to King Carlos V (Cruz). The codex itself is divided into thirteen chapters, organized anatomically from head to which reflects the top-down structure of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. Pliny described nature starting from the heavens and moving down to the earth. This may be either a coincidence or an indication of the texts available at the Colegio. In the *Libellus*, titled *Burns of the Body*, Martin de la Cruz prescribed, "nopal juice, nohpalli, teamoxтли, amoxтли, tetmitl, ehcapahtli, texiyotl y huitzquilitl. Apply and rub on this mixture along with honey and egg yolk" (71). This remedy was accompanied with images of three of plants above mentioned. Overall, the *Libellus* contains 185 illustrations and 227 medicinal plants; the majority of which remain untranslated in Nahuatl even today.

In comparing these healers' medical training and respective texts, it seems they have more differences than similarities. Formal university studies were barely emerging in the Middle Ages. Badiano and Cruz, on the other hand, taught at a Franciscan school where biological studies may have been a major subject matter. Unlike Hildegard's text, the extensive

use of illustrations in the Badiano Codex gave a face to the herbs mentioned. It is clear the illustrations were made for someone who can read Latin but did not have previous knowledge of these types of plants as demonstrated through the exaggerations of physical attributes, such as thorns, colors, shapes, and flowers. This indicates the codex was made so that a foreigner, such as King Carlos V, could identify these plants or enjoy the aesthetic appeal of the images. Furthermore, whereas Hildegard organized *Physica* into nine chapters regarding plants, stones, fish, reptiles, and animals, Cruz and Badiano organized the *Libellus* according to ailments starting from head to toe.

Although it remains unclear where exactly Hildegard and Martin de la Cruz received their medical training, both proved to be very knowledgeable in the subject matter. Hildegard's basic principles of health made up a comprehensive system of healing for the mind, body, and spirit. The last chapter in *Liber Divinum Operum* describes one of Hildegard's visions that proposed four dimensions of holistic healing: physical healing with natural remedies and nutrition, healing with thirty-five spiritual forces of the soul, healing with the power of four cosmic elements, and finally restoration through the "oneness" with God (Strehlow xii-xiii). The first dimension, natural remedies and nutrition, can be seen through the discussion above of *Physica* that described herbal and plant remedies. The concept, *Viriditas*, or the connection between spiritual and physical, further demonstrates the supernatural connection that she believed existed between the natural world and God. *Viriditas* is described as "all living things, energy of life from God, the power of the youth, the power in seeds, the reproduction of cells, the power of regeneration, freshness, and creativity" (Strehlow xxvi-xxvii). Furthermore, good people were said to be bursting with *Viriditas* (Cahill 85). Hildegard proclaimed in the introduction of the chapter regarding plants that "All the elements served mankind and, sensing that man was alive, they busied themselves

in aiding his life in every way” (Hildegard von Bingen 9). Natural remedies were considered direct gifts from God and contained a spiritual component, as seen in the *Viriditas* concept. Hildegard’s medicine was mostly preventative in nature, largely diet based, with an emphasis on moderation. Prescriptions such as plants, white meats, seafood, beer, and wine come as no surprise as malnutrition was prevalent during the Middle Ages. Secondly, she believed in thirty-five healing forces of the soul that can heal or destroy both the individual and humanity. These healing forces are based on Christian virtues and vices. For example, in *Liber Vitae Meritorum*, she describes the vice of gluttony as being connected to the stomach, intestinal system, and heart disorders. Her third principle of health was deeply influenced by the Greek Hippocratic four element and four humor systems. The four-element system and its relation to the human body can be described as follows:

From fire they have the warmth in their bodies, from air they have their breath, from water they have their blood, and from earth their bodies (the materials of muscles and bones). They can thank fire for their sight, air for their hearing, water for movement, and earth for their ability to walk (Strehlow and Hertzka xx).

Her last component of health is the restoration of Oneness of God through proper attitudes based on strength and fullness of Christian faith. Hildegard also promoted overall balance to maintain physical and spiritual health. In a letter she wrote to Elisabeth of Schonau, she advised, “Do not lay on more strain than the body can endure. Immoderate straining and abstinence bring nothing useful to the soul” (Hildegard von Bingen 6). All four components of Hildegard’s principles of health greatly reflect the importance of maintaining a proper balance between the physical self and a strong spiritual relationship with God through sound morals and strong faith.



On the other hand, the indigenous world view, or “cosmovision,” is fundamental for the analyses and understanding of Aztec principles of health (Montellano and Schussheim 54). According to the Aztecs, the world is divided in complementary pairs with earth and sky, hot and cold, female and male, where a pervasive and dual opposition of contrary elements was present and balance was necessary to maintain health. Animism is the attribution of a soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena with the belief that a supernatural power organizes and animates the material universe. Upon consuming a plant, the energy or god within it would also be ingested and further aid in the healing process. For example, Piltzintecuhtli, or flor del niño, has the essence of Piltzintecuhtli, which was the god of young corn and the birthing sun (Estrada et al). The Aztecs saw the human body as a micro-universe that reflected a triad universe with sky, earth, and the underworld. The human body contained three souls that can be strengthened or weakened during a person’s lifetime. They are the Tonalli, the Teyolia, and the Ihiyotl. The Tonalli is located in the frontal area of the skull and is responsible for growth and development. It grows in strength with age, enters and leaves body during shamanic rituals, and is connected to the animal god of an individual’s birth date. Shamans ingested hallucinogenic substances so their Tonalli can establish communication with other gods in order to determine the causes of a supernatural illness. The Tonalli determines how a human must behave and the duties they must follow to lead a good life. “If one did not have the right humility, they do not follow their duty, or were not honorable to the gods, they can lead to an auspicious life. On the hand, prayer and penitence can improve a bad fate” (76). Nevertheless, a human’s spiritual path was not fixed, as life experiences as well as relationships with other animistic forces forged the creation of different paths.

Unlike the Tonalli, the Teyolia is inseparable from the body, which meant death ensued with its departure. The Teyolia is connected to the heart or the Catholic concept of the

soul that travels to the world of the dead. It is the center of thoughts, emotions, memories, will, and mental activities that can be harmed with immoral behavior. Finally, the Ihiyotl is a luminous gas found in the liver that could attract or cast spells over other human beings. It is responsible for passions such as rage, envy, and sexual desire (80). A virtuous person had a clean Ihiyotl and one whose interior forces were in harmony had a cemeilli (united liver), which meant they were happy and full of pleasure (83). All three souls must be in harmony to achieve health. Furthermore, moderation in diet, work, sex, and alcohol consumption (too much can weaken one's Tonalli), regular exercise, as well as the adherence of sound morals and a strong relationship with the gods were all needed to maintain health.

While comparing their principles of health, it should be noted that Hildegard believed in the four elements system, while the Aztecs maintained a concept of complementary pairs that reached beyond the opposition present in the four element system. The Aztec concept of animism is like Hildegard's concept of *Viriditas*, in that both included underlying beliefs of the presence of supernatural entities in all living things. While the Aztecs maintained polytheistic beliefs and contacted spiritual entities by means of the Tonalli, Hildegard's maintained a largely monotheistic belief with the omnipresence of God in all living creatures through her concept of *Viriditas*. Hildegard's ideologies demonstrated humans had control over nature which then took care of their survival needs, while the Aztecs coexisted with natural entities rather than denominating them. The Aztec concept of animism meant it was essential to maintain strong relationships with nature rather than dominate nature.

Both Hildegard and the Aztec writers believed in uniting or strengthening a spiritual relationship with their respective gods to maintain health. While some shamans utilized hallucinogenic substances to achieve these ends, both Hildegard and the Aztecs incorporated prayer and moral behavior to develop close relationships with their respective God or gods.

Both Hildegard and the Aztecs shared a deep connection with the natural world. Interestingly, Hildegard's death in Germany was a mere two years before the birth of St. Francis of Assisi in Umbria, Italy in 1181. St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, asserted every living thing had a soul. He maintained a profound relationship with nature evident through sermons he preached to birds and other animals. Hildegard's relationship with the natural world through the concept of *Viriditas* as well as the appearance of St. Francis of Assisi as the saint of ecology mark a clear turning point in Catholicism. The institution Cruz and Badiano taught at was established by a Franciscan order where natural sciences were a prominent area of study. Though the Spanish were responsible for the destruction of many ancient texts, this Franciscan school, whose founders also maintained a rich relationship with nature, was largely responsible for the re-exploration of past medicinal and herbal knowledge at that time.

Hildegard was largely influenced by the Hippocratic four elements and humor systems coupled with Catholic spirituality. Disharmony among the four elements was primarily responsible for diseases and imbalances of the soul, with two usually dominant in varying degrees. Hildegard states:

The elements maintain the health of the person when they function in an orderly manner. As soon as they stray from this place, they make a person sick and die. As long as the flow of the humors in a person functions properly, and maintains warmth, posture, blood, and flesh, then a person enjoys good health. (Strehlow and Hertzka xxi)

Diseases and their respective cures were linked to four qualities: hot, dry, moist, or cold (Hildegard von Bingen 5). For example, "Every plant is either hot or cold, and grows thus, since the heat of the herbs signified the spirit, and the cold, the body" (10). For the Greeks, hot represented yellow bile and was connected to the liver; dry represented blood that was connected to the heart; moist was phlegm caused by the

brain; and cold was black bile or toxins caused by disorders in the spleen. In addition to her Hippocratic influences, Hildegard believed that, "Every dysfunction of the body requires healing of the soul, and healing of the soul requires activating the divine energy represented by the thirty-five healing virtues, or healing forces (Strehlow 58). To further illustrate this belief, she said the vice,

Love of Entertainment is related to the pathology of the nervous system in the region of the cervical vertebrae, especially C<sub>3</sub>, which controls the sense of smell. The nerves here are connected to the trigeminal nerve, which is responsible for facial muscles. About 70 percent of all odors stimulate the trigeminal nerve receptor and cause side effects to the face, teeth, mouth, and scalp. (79)

Diseases, in Hildegard's perspective, were caused by both a disharmony in the four element and humor system as well as human vices. According to Hildegard, true healing requires, "Contacting that inner consciousness and organic intelligence which is the real healing power. This, as her writings indicate is an act of faith; it cannot be done mechanically or merely intellectually" (Strehlow and Hertzka xi). This method of healing seems to be an internal mechanism that anyone can tap into with proper faith. This is not to say she is a faith healer, for she also integrated physical substances such as gems, minerals, animal parts, herbs and food prescriptions. In addition, she incorporated fasting, bloodletting, cupping, and observation of physical symptoms to determine the proper treatment of diseases.

In contrast with Hildegard's beliefs, the pre-Columbian Aztecs believed the cause of diseases was an intricate mix of religion, magic, and science: religion, because gods can cause an illness; magic, because some illnesses were caused by magic and thus needed to be combated by magic; and science, for the animals, plants, and minerals that were incorporated to combat disease (Estrada et al). They relied heavily on their

various gods and believed organic changes provoked a loss of balance, such as an excess heat. A disease can be caused by disturbances between gods and a human. For example, Tlaloc was the god of water and rain that caused colds, pneumonia, and rheumatic illnesses if a human intruded with his works (Montellano and Schussheim 80). This further illustrates the mixture of religious and spiritual beliefs upon the contraction of a disease. An Aztec remedy was a combination of the astrological circumstances that reigned in the moment that the individual was born (their Tonalli), the circumstances (both physical and astrological) that existed when the illness was contracted, and plant medicines depending on the nature of the illness. A *xiuhximatqui* was an herbalist with empirical knowledge of the real and magical properties of plants, animals, and minerals such as gold, copper, iron, and applied observational skills to recognize the clinical marks of the affliction (Estrada et al). Different types of doctors, though the generic name was *ticitl* or *tepatl*, included: *tezoc* or *teximani*, who were blood letters, *tlamatqui* or *temixintiani* who were midwives, and *papiani* or *panamacani*, the botanists (Estrada et al). A human who contracted an illness by magic needed to be cured with magic. A magical healer carried tools such as tobacco, dove feathers, human heads, and conches amongst others to impress their patients, legitimize their position, and create the proper environment that was mysterious and magical in nature (Estrada et al). They examined their patient's Tonalli, which correlated with the spirit animal who guided them throughout their lifetime. Not all doctors were magical healers: "a bad doctor . . . even more would sometimes use spells and superstitions to give the impression that his cures are good" (*Historia edición del P. Garibay, Libro X, cap VIII, 12, in Estrada et al*).

The causes and treatments of disease among the Pre-Columbian Aztecs and Germanic peoples contrast greatly. Both relied on the mercy of their God or gods as part of the healing process and believed vices were a major cause of diseases. Though Hildegard was deeply religious, which can be seen in

her spiritual healing based on the Catholic principles of vices and virtues, she seemed to be more influenced by the Hippocratic humor and element systems for the immediate cause and cures of diseases. It appeared the physical component would cause and cure a short-term disease such as a stomach ache, yet the spiritual component is what ultimately determined long-term health. For example, neither the vices of gluttony nor the love of entertainment was associated with a single illness, yet both have various effects on complete organ systems. Maintaining proper balance depending on how much one worked, food consumption, sexual activity, and so on, determined short-term health. Spiritual balance was maintained through strong faith and virtue, and ultimately determined the long-term health. Both cultures integrated gems, minerals, animal parts, food prescriptions, fasting, bloodletting, cupping, saunas, herbal remedies, infusions, oils, and presses as physical components of healing. Both also observed physical symptoms and questioned the patient to determine the cause and proper treatment of a disease.

## **Conclusion**

Both the Germanic peoples of the High Middle Ages and the Aztecs during the Age of Exploration were heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church in their holistic medical practices. This can be seen through their healers, their respective medical training and texts, and finally through their holistic medicinal beliefs based on principles of health. Hildegard was an abbess and had much power in her society, as seen through her frank communication with the Pope. Cruz and Badiano, by contrast, held teaching positions at the Franciscan school, the Colegio of Santa Cruz, where they did not exercise as much power, as can be seen through Martin's humble introduction of *Libellus*. While it is uncertain where all three received their medical training, only Cruz and Badiano were part of a formal institution that focused on biological studies. Furthermore, Hildegard was not directly petitioned

to write a medical text like Martin de la Cruz. Hildegard's medical text described the physical attributes of plants in accordance to the Hippocratic model, whereas Cruz and Badiano included colored illustrations for identification purposes and aesthetic appeal. Their principles of health, however, were similar in that both believed spiritual and physical components were necessary, yet Hildegard's views were based on the omnipresence of a single God, while the Aztecs maintained polytheistic beliefs. Both believed in a supernatural component that existed within nature as seen in Hildegard's concept of *Viriditas* and the Aztec's' concept of animism. In regard to the cause and treatment of diseases, Hildegard believed imbalances based on the Hippocratic model and Catholic vices caused diseases, while the Aztecs believed bad relationships with the gods, magic, immorality, and physical imbalances were the culprit. Both incorporated physical components such as plants, herbs, animals, and nutrition, although they differed greatly in their spiritual component of healing. Contact with a spiritual entity by means of hallucinogenic substances were utilized in Shamanic rituals whereas Hildegard believed true healing was only possible through contacting inner consciousness as a product of faith.

## **Epilogue**

How have these practices withstood the passage of time? The decline of holistic and herbal practices was much more prevalent in Germanic or European states compared with Aztec nations. Starting in the thirteenth century, Padua and Bologna emerged as the first European universities with extensive medical studies. This widened the gap between professional doctors from trained universities and holistic healers such as Hildegard. In the fifteenth century, the catastrophic effects and death rate of the Black Plague proved the four elements and four humor systems adopted by Hildegard to be largely ineffective and caused the population to look toward other,

more effective methods of treatment. In the sixteenth century, Paracelsus (1493-1541) also known as the Swiss German Father of Toxicology, largely adopted the practice of observational sciences and looked down upon the reference of ancient texts for information. Much of his treatments were based on chemical substances. The eighteenth century gave way to the Age of Enlightenment with the development of the Scientific Method; much of the herbal remedies up to that point were based on traditional practice rather than the result of testing by means of the scientific method. Even today, many treatments lack studies to determine their true effectiveness. The nineteenth century witnessed the formalization of pharmacology on which current Western models are based, illustrating yet another step away from traditional practices. Finally, in twentieth-century America, the Flexner Report of 1910 sought to regulate medical institutions and closed down many schools whose studies were focused on osteopathic medicine, chiropractic medicine, electrotherapy, eclectic medicine, naturopathy, and homeopathy. Much of Hildegard's texts remained on shelves in Catholic libraries until the second part of the twentieth century when an interest in holistic medical practices resurfaced. Dr. Gottfried Hertzka and Dr. Wighard Strehlow established the Hildegard Center in Allensbach, Germany, in the 1970s, practicing Hildegard's herbal remedies and treatments. The overall percentage of Germans using Holistic medicine has increased from 52% in 1970 to 70% in 2010 (Herbal Medicine in Primary Healthcare in Germany).

In comparison, Aztec herbal remedies did not experience such a dramatic decline. The existence of the Colegio de Santa Cruz itself indicated an importance in the preservation and continuation of Aztec medicinal practice. The interest of herbal practices by the Spanish enabled the study and re-recording of new texts even as herbal practices were in a stark decline in European countries. It wasn't until the 1920s that the *Libellus* was rediscovered in the Vatican Library, after which a copy was translated into Spanish in the 1960s. The



original text found in the Vatican library was returned to the Mexican people in the early 1990s, provoking another wave of studies of the text. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari introduced the newest version of the *Libellus* and stated that herbal remedies have been, “a cultural tradition that has always been a pride of Mexico” (Cruz and Bandiano vii). The fact that the president of Mexico himself wrote the introduction indicates the importance this branch of knowledge continues to be in Mexican culture. Poverty in rural areas of Mexico also may have enabled the continuation of these practices, as many of the poor simply cannot not afford to visit a doctor in the city and rely on herbal remedies instead. Many of these plants were grown at home and were passed on by generation to generation. Contemporary bilingual children books, such as *Los Remedios de Mi Nana* or *Los Remedios de Mi Tata (My Grandma/Grandpa’s Remedies)* by Roni Capin Rivera-Ashford, prove a strong influence of cross-generational sharing of this branch of knowledge to this day. Mexican healers known as “curanderos” still exist in the contemporary world and share many similarities with Aztec herbal healers, mixed with Catholic beliefs and saints.

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